THE INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL MEANINGS ON EVERYDAY TRANSPORT PRACTICES

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Abstract

Transport is a fundamental component of our everyday lives, integral to almost everything we do. Accordingly, our transport practices have wide ranging implications. The ways in which people travel are most often described as being guided by instrumental considerations such as time, cost, and convenience. Yet travel is also influenced by cultural considerations such as social meanings—including social norms and stereotypes. This thesis focuses on improving understandings of the influences of social meanings, and as such explores some of the least well understood influences on transport practices.

The research has three core goals: 1) to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch, New Zealand, 2) to investigate the influences these social meanings have on transport practices, and 3) to identify some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices. The thesis draws on empirical data collected through in-depth engagement with 32 research participants. Most participants attended a focus group, completed a qualitative travel diary, and participated in an individual interview.

A wide range of social meanings influenced participants' transport practices. Meanings associated with status, accomplishment, gender, clothing, risk, rebellion, poverty, health, environment, age, body shape, and more, influenced practices of driving, cycling, motorcycling, walking, and bus use.

Social meanings influenced participants in three main ways. They influenced participants' use of different transport modes, choices of vehicles, and performances of travel. Over 90% of participants reported that their transport practices were influenced by social meanings to some extent; over 70% reported that social meanings were a major

influence on their use of at least one mode of transport; and 20% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their transport practices overall.

Reviewing the findings in light of ongoing conceptual debates helped to develop explanations of the influences of social meanings on transport practices. Considering whether participants were influenced by social meanings through conscious or non-conscious pathways helped shed light on some influences. Particularly, participants appeared to reject bus use without being conscious of doing so; the concept of habitus helped to reveal and explain this phenomenon. Likewise, reviewing the direct and indirect structuring influences of social norms was enlightening. Social norms directly help to reproduce existing practices, but they also influence the development of infrastructure, laws, and material goods, all of which also help to reproduce stability in transport practices over time. Further, reviewing theories of intergroup relations drew attention to subtle variations in the ways participants travelled; such as parking a car so as to obscure a dent from view. Participants used these variations to manage the negative perceptions of others, and to reinforce their positions in social groups or hierarchies.

This research has implications for future research and policy. It highlights the importance of social meanings and demonstrates that social meanings could usefully inform transport strategies. For example, understanding social meanings could facilitate effective interventions to encourage the use of fuel efficient cars or of public transport, to manage tensions between different groups of road users, and to improve road user safety training.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Human society is infused with social meanings; we live amongst a throng of stereotypes, norms, and symbols, many of which influence the way we live our lives. This thesis investigates how social meanings influence everyday transport practices and was inspired by Moore's (2010, p. 149) declaration that "widespread use of the bus will never occur if it's viewed as the 'loser cruiser'". If Moore is right, then social meanings, like the *loser cruiser*, impact the uptake of different transport modes. Again, if Moore is right, transport researchers and policy makers need to drag social meanings out of the shadows of their disciplines, and recognise and respond to their influence. But is Moore right? This thesis answers that question and more; it details how diverse social meanings influence practices of driving, cycling, motorcycling, and walking, as well as bus use.

Improving the impacts of transport practices is enormously important. Transport practices are inextricably linked to the spatial, temporal, and social configurations of daily life. Some transport practices are also deeply problematic as they can lead to environmental degradation, and to poor social and health outcomes. Understanding how social meanings influence transport practices may contribute to the development of transport systems that lead to fewer negative impacts and more positive experiences for users.

This research engages a small participant cohort in an in-depth study of whether, and how, social meanings influence transport practices. Through this research, I explore a wide array of social meanings and their influences on transport practices. I also investigate whether using extant theories and concepts facilitates understandings of the influences identified.

1.1 Research Context

Transport and society are intricately and recursively entwined. The spatial, temporal, and social configurations of daily life have evolved in tandem with transport technologies, infrastructures, and practices. From upright walking, to bicycles and buses—and maybe in future driverless cars and personal jetpacks—the way we move and the way we live are fundamentally inseparable. For example, urban form both influences and is influenced by transport networks and developments. The locations of housing, employment, education, and leisure spaces are all guided by how we travel between them. In turn, how we link these key spaces influences the wider social environment in which we live, shaping social networks and cohesion, equalities and inequalities, and the synchronicity and scheduling of daily practices. In this thesis, I set out to better understand a set of practices that is integral to life as we know it.

No era's transport systems have been perfect and contemporary transport researchers strive to influence the ongoing evolution of those systems. Environmental and ecological concerns are commonly cited in transport literature (Aldred, 2010; Bean, Kearns, & Collins, 2008; Gardner & Abraham, 2007; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Health concerns also feature, including those stemming from pollution, collisions, noise, and sedentarism (Bean et al., 2008; Freund & Martin, 2004; Gardner & Abraham, 2007; Guell, Panter, Jones, & Ogilvie, 2012; A. Jones, Steinbach, Roberts, Goodman, & Green, 2012; May, Tranter, & Warn, 2008; Norton, 2007; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Steinbach, Green, Datta, & Edwards, 2011; Tranter, 2010). Social and community concerns include congestion, social dislocation, resource conflicts, and reduced community cohesion and street life (Appleyard, 1983; Böhm, Jones, Land, & Paterson, 2006; Murtagh, Gatersleben, & Uzzell, 2012b; Tranter, 2010). In addition, concerns about well-being focus on travel stress and how travel time affects quality of life

(Root, Boardman, & Fielding, 1996; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Tranter, 2010). My research is not intended to address a specific contemporary transport problem (as much research does) but rather to develop general understandings with wide-ranging potential applications.

1.2 Problem Statement

Transport practices are both an essential part of all our lives and far from perfect. It follows that transport practices could be changed for the better, and that changes could have immense repercussions for human society. Academics and policy experts have engaged with transport practices for these very reasons, but their engagement has focused on some areas more than others (for reviews and commentary see Knowles, 2009; Law, 1999; Røe, 2000; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Urry, 2000). Scope remains to improve understandings of these highly complex, and deeply consequential, sets of practices.

In this thesis, I address how social meanings influence transport practices. For the purposes of this research, I understand a social meaning to be a widely made association between a transport practice and some other characteristic or behaviour. For example, drivers of small cars may be assumed to be female, and motorcyclists may be expected to seek excitement. Stereotypes and social norms are both types of social meanings, and I assert that while meanings often stem from cognition, they can also emerge from embodied and sensory encounters. Most importantly, I argue that transport practices are more than ways of moving between locations or coordinates, they have meaning for people.

Extant literature indicates that shared social meanings influence transport mode choices. For example, alongside Moore's assertion (at the start of this chapter) that social meanings can influence bus use, we find claims that social meanings influence the uptake of other modes of transport. For example, Pooley et al. (2013, p. 150) report that in one of their

research locations, "cycling...was so stigmatised that the idea of practising it was faintly absurd".

Social meanings have also been shown to influence how road users interact with one another. For example, Doob and Gross (1968) demonstrated that the status of a car, stationary at a green traffic light, influenced whether, and after how long, the driver of the vehicle behind would honk their horn. More concerning, Yeung and von Hippel (2008) revealed that being reminded of stereotypes that women are bad drivers made women twice as likely to collide with jaywalking pedestrians in a driving simulation exercise. Social meanings have also been implicated in influencing whether road users engage with one another with empathy or aggression (Aldred, 2013a; Basford, Reid, Lester, Thomson, & Tolmie, 2002; Musselwhite, Avineri, Susilo, & Bhattachary, 2012). If each of these reports is true, then social meanings can be expected to substantially influence transport practices.

Research has noted the influences of social meanings on transport practices but more systematic investigation is needed. Particularly notable to date is Steg's seminal work considering the importance of symbolic motivations[1] for car use, compared to affective and instrumental motivations (Steg, 2005; Steg, Vlek, & Slotegraaf, 2001). Following Steg and colleagues, the relevance of social meanings to transport practices has gained more traction in academic literature (see for example Bergstad et al., 2011; Lois & López-Sáez, 2009). Subsequent studies of social meanings have provided valuable insights, but have not yielded comprehensive understandings of the social meanings they study, have often focused on a narrow range of meanings and commonly a single transport mode, have provided incomplete

[1] Steg's description of symbolic motivations closely resembles my description of social meanings having influence on transport practices.

understandings of *how* social meanings influence practices, have not thoroughly explored how different social meanings intertwine or how they interact with other kinds of influences on transport practices, and have rarely recognised transport practices as multiple, fluid, and context dependent. I argue that, beyond demonstrating that social meanings influence transport practices, it has become appropriate to ask which meanings, which practices, how, why, and under what circumstances.

1.3 Research Approach and Contribution

This research has three core goals. First, to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch, New Zealand; second, to investigate the influences these social meanings have on transport practices; and third, to identify some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices.

In terms of research methods, participants engaged in focus groups, a diary exercise, and individual interviews. Focus groups had a goal of identifying social meanings associated with transport. The diary exercise encouraged participants to reflect on their own transport practices, bringing some previously non-conscious elements of practices into a discursive realm. Individual interviews facilitated detailed probing of how social meanings influenced transport practices. A cohort of 32 participants, dropping to 25 for some exercises, participated in the research. This small cohort was not representative of the wider population of Christchurch (or of populations beyond that one city), but allowed for in-depth engagement with individuals to explore their multiple transport practices and perspectives in detail.

This research contributes to knowledge in three distinct ways. First, the development of a new Repeat Question Diary (RQD) method adds to the suite of methods appropriate for the study of mobile practices. The RQD method facilitates the collection of rich, fluid, and reflective data. Second, the research shows how social meanings influence everyday transport practices. Particularly, it shows that social meanings influenced participants' choices of transport mode, their vehicle choices, and the ways in which they enacted or performed travel. Third, this research adds to our understanding of how social meanings influence transport practices. It does so by identifying some pertinent theoretical debates and positions and discussing their relevance and applicability to transport and social meanings. Further, the research extends existing understandings of the social meanings associated with different transport practices. It especially does this through a multi-modal consideration of transport that allows the similarities and differences between social meanings associated with different practices to be explored.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 sets out the conceptual and theoretical basis for the research described in this thesis. It begins by recognising the place of social meanings amongst other influences on transport practices. It then works towards developing a broad definition of social meanings. The remainder of the chapter focuses on exploring the pathways through which social meanings might influence transport practices. This part of the chapter reviews several key debates including whether social meanings influence practices through conscious or non-conscious pathways, the relative roles of structure and agency in influencing everyday transport practices, and how social group processes mediate the influence of social meanings.

Chapter 3 reviews the social meanings that the extant literature describes as being associated with different transport practices. The chapter is broken down into five mode-based sections, one for each of driving, cycling, motorcycling, bus use, and walking. Each section details the most prominent social meanings connected to that mode of transport and its users, according to previous research.

In chapter 4, I introduce the methods used in this research. The chapter begins with a brief description of Christchurch, the study location, and then continues to outline participant selection processes, data collection methods, and analysis techniques. It particularly attends to the rationale for, and design of, the three different methods used to collect data: focus groups, participant diaries, and individual interviews.

Chapter 5 is the first of three results chapters. This chapter addresses the first research goal, exploring the social meanings associated with transport. It draws primarily on focus group brainstorming and discussion exercises. Mode-based sections (covering driving, cycling, motorcycling, bus use, and walking) detail the social meanings that focus group participants associated with the different modes and their users. The chapter highlights similarities and differences between the social meanings identified by participants and those described in literature. This chapter provides a solid foundation for the subsequent investigation of the ways in which social meanings influence transport practices.

Chapter 6 launches the investigation of how social meanings influence transport practices, thus it starts to address the second research goal. It begins by showing that social meanings influenced participants' transport mode choices, vehicle choices, and travel performances. The remainder of the chapter is divided into mode-based sections; these describe which social meanings influenced which practices in what ways.

Chapter 7 is the final results chapter. This chapter has three main sections. The first concludes my response to the second research goal by reporting how many participants appeared to be influenced by social meanings, and how much they were influenced. The second section addresses the third research goal by providing observations on how theoretical and conceptual positions (described in chapter 2) can help us understand the ways in which social meanings influence transport practices. The third section draws out some of the findings of the research that may have methodological implications for future studies of social meanings.

In chapter 8, I demonstrate how better understandings of the influences of social meanings can help us develop more effective transport strategies. This chapter has five mode-based sections and one additional section focusing on the cross-modal influences of social meanings. In each of these sections, I make a suggestion that demonstrates the scope and potential effectiveness of using understandings of social meanings to develop strategies that improve experiences and impacts of transport practices.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with a final overview of the progress made towards the research goals, the research's limitations and contribution, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Definitions and Conceptual Background

In this chapter, I lay out some of the definitions and principles underlying the research. These principles guide my methodological approach, interpretation of findings, and appreciation of implications; as such, they are fundamental to a full understanding of this thesis.

I begin by briefly considering some of the factors, aside from social meanings, that influence transport practices. Transport practices are "multiply determined" (Stanovich, 1997, p. 152) and here I acknowledge and emphasise the context in which they exist, before proceeding to a more singular focus on social meanings in the rest of the thesis. In the second part of the chapter, I work towards a definition of social meanings. Stereotypes and social norms are subtypes within my wider definition of social meanings and both are defined here. In the third and final part of the chapter, I consider existing concepts and theories that might help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices. I focus on theories associated with conscious and non-conscious responses to influences, those associated with structure and agency, and those concerned with social groups.

2.1 Influences on Transport Practices

This research focuses on how social meanings influence transport practices. Transport practices are multiply determined and it is not my intention to imply that social meanings are their only, or most important, influence. Rather, I intend this research to complement and extend existing research on a much wider range of influences. Before starting to look at social meanings in detail, I want to begin by briefly considering instrumental, habitual, affective, and embodied influences on transport practices. Reviewing these influences now puts social meanings in a wider context and facilitates later references to interactions between the

influences of social meanings and other kinds of influences on transport practices. I will also touch on the role of mobilities scholarship in shaping the approach taken in this thesis.

2.1.1 Instrumental influences

Instrumental factors can influence transport practices. Instrumental influences are those that enable or inhibit an activity or the achievement of a desired outcome (Dittmar, 1992; Gatersleben, 2012; Steg, 2005). If I want to get from A to B, instrumental factors that might influence my travel choices include that there is no bus route between A and B, that taxis are expensive, and that it would take a long time to walk.

Instrumental influences are the most researched and best understood of all the influences on transport practices (Dickinson, Robbins, & Fletcher, 2009; Gatersleben, 2012; Lois & López-Sáez, 2009; Root et al., 1996; Spinney, 2009, 2011; Steg, 2005). The dominance of instrumental factors in transport research may be partly a result of an instrumental view of transport itself (Spinney, 2009). Research considering the sole purpose of transport as being to effect a move from A to B is likely to identify instrumental influences; a wider range of influences might be identified by research that considers transport as potentially an instrumental endeavour, but also one that allows self-expression, enjoyment, and powerful sensory experiences (Adey, 2010; Cook, Shaw, & Simpson, 2015; Cresswell, 2006; Dittmar, 1992; Spinney, 2009).

Although instrumental factors can influence transport practices, there is debate as to their importance. For example, an instrumental view of transport usually recommends reducing journey times, but this goal conflicts with consistent findings that research participants value travel time in itself (Guell & Ogilvie, 2015; Lee & Ingold, 2006;

Middleton, 2009; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013; Watts & Lyons, 2011; Watts & Urry, 2008).

2.1.2 Habit

Alongside instrumental factors, habits may also influence transport practices. Habits are, in a very basic sense, repeated practices that do not involve conscious consideration (Gatersleben, 2012; Guell et al., 2012; Seamon, 2015; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). As Gatersleben explains:

> When we leave our home in the morning we rarely think about which mode of travel to use to get to work, we simply pick up our keys, walk out of the house, get in the car and drive away. (2012, p. 677)

A range of factors may influence the development and cessation of habits (Guell et al., 2012; Murtagh, Gatersleben, & Uzzell, 2012a; Pooley et al., 2013; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). For example, life events (such as changing job, moving house, or having children) can disrupt practices in ways that trigger changes to habits (Chatterjee, Sherwin, & Jain, 2013; Gatersleben, 2012; Guell et al., 2012; Pooley et al., 2013; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). The importance of habit to transport practices is unclear, partly because of a lack of consensus around habit disruption and re-evaluation, but the consensus does support a significant role for habit (cf. Chatterjee et al., 2013; Fujii & Kitamura, 2003; Guell et al., 2012; Kingham, Taylor, & Koorey, 2011; Verplanken, Aarts, van Knippenberg, & van Knippenberg, 1994; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011).

2.1.3 Affect

Compared to work on the instrumental and habitual factors influencing transport practices, work on transport and affect is less extensive. There is no single, consensual

definition of affect and different disciplines have tended to define the concept slightly differently (Anderson, 2014; Pile, 2010; Thrift, 2004). Sometimes affect is considered in terms of personal *feeling* or *emotion* (Anderson, 2009a; Bissell, 2010; Dewsbury, 2009; Gibson & Waitt, 2009; Thrift, 2004). In human geography, definitions tend to extend beyond emotion and often include a (not necessarily conscious) experience of intensity, incorporating moods and shared atmospheres (Anderson, 2014; Bissell, 2010; Pile, 2010; Thrift, 2004).[2]

Geography has historically paid relatively little attention to the role of affect in influencing transport practices. This may have been partly the result of the difficulties inherent in understanding, researching, and communicating a pre-conscious and often more-than-personal dimension of social life (Anderson, 2009b; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Pile, 2010; Thrift, 2004). More recently, however, work attempting to incorporate the affective features of transport practices has been proliferating and diversifying (see for example Brown, 2014; Cupples & Ridley, 2008; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Spinney, 2011; Tranter & Sharpe, 2012). Bissell (2010), for example, reflects on the different affective atmospheres of public transport experienced as a mobile office, as a location permeated by Friday night excitement, and as a site associated with delay and frustration.

2.1.4 Embodied influences

Increasingly, research is incorporating the embodied as well as the affective features of transport (A. Jensen, 2013; Law, 1999; Merriman, 2014; Middleton, 2010; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). Travel has corporeal, sensory, and kinaesthetic elements and incorporates embedded physical skills, such as steering, braking, and changing gear (Merriman, 2014; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Spinney, 2011;

[2] For more comprehensive discussions of the various definitions and uses of 'affect' see Pile (2010), Thrift (2004), Bissell (2010), Anderson (2014), and Dewsbury (2009).

Thrift, 2004; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). When a person rides a bicycle, drives a car, or catches a bus they will experience bodily sensations—perhaps aching muscles, the warmth of the sun on their skin, or the discomfort of a poorly designed seat. Investigating embodied experiences can be important to understanding why people travel in the ways they do, and increasingly research is taking this into account (Hutch, 2007; Ingold, 2004; A. Jensen, 2013; Law, 1999; Middleton, 2010; Spinney, 2009, 2011; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013).

2.1.5 Mobilities scholarship

Of particular relevance to the development of my research has been mobilities scholarship. The mobilities "turn" or "paradigm", as it is sometimes known (Adey, 2010; O. B. Jensen, 2010; Knowles, 2009; Lugo, 2013; Merriman, 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Spinney, 2009), has followed the broad project of establishing a "movement-driven social science" (Büscher & Urry, 2009, p. 100). Although mobilities scholarship includes a wide range of types of movement—from the movements of migrants, to food, to ideas—human movement dominates. Transport is an obvious point of focus for a social science of movement.

As well as pursuing research topics focusing on movement, mobilities scholars usually share a philosophy that elements of study are often mobile, variable, or in flux. As such, mobilities scholarship has broadly followed an earlier precedent of rejecting notions of homogeneity and stasis in practices (Adey, 2010; Bennett, 1999; Butler, 1999; Clarke, Doel, & Housiaux, 2003; Gamson, 2003; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Law, 1999; Maffesoli, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Middleton, 2009; Muggleton, 2007; Pile, 2010). Whether or not mobilities studies have brought new insights to the study of transport (cf. Merriman, 2009; Shaw & Hesse, 2010), its arguments have drawn relative fluidity and fixity to my attention. For example, I have observed that practices that are repeated habitually, day after day—and

so are relatively fixed features of a person's life—can provide enormously varied experiences. Steg (2005) asked questionnaire respondents to rate scales of adjective pairs (such as "tense-relaxed") according to their evaluations of car use in general. My research (informed by mobilities scholarship) suggests that even routine practices vary considerably and it is entirely plausible to find driving both tense and relaxing, even at different moments during the same journey. This section has highlighted some of the multiple factors influencing transport practices, a mobilities perspective encourages me to emphasise that I consider transport practices to be multiply determined, variable, contextual, and nuanced (see also Fincham, 2007; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Musselwhite et al., 2012; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011).

2.1.6 Section summary

In summary, there is a range of different influences on people's everyday transport practices. These include instrumental factors, habit, affect, and the embodied experiences of travelling. These factors have been presented here as separate, identifiable influences on practices but they are of course closely interrelated. Habits may stem from instrumentally-based decisions; affect and embodiment may coincide and combine in felt intensities; and social meanings may incorporate references to any combination of these factors. A mobilities perspective helps this thesis to retain a sense of fluidity that enables different perspectives to combine in different ways.

Again, although factors have been presented here as essentially separate, drawing strict distinctions between different domains of human experience (such as cognitive and embodied domains, or embodiment and affect) is, in many respects, a problematic pursuit (Adey, 2010; Büscher & Urry, 2009; Ingold, 2004; A. Jensen, 2013; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). For this reason, while focusing on social meanings in

this research, I acknowledge that separating these out from other influences on transport practices is an analytic artifice—an artifice that is useful for investigating a specific element of social life in detail, but an artifice nonetheless.

This section has presented a broad perspective on some of the factors that influence transport practices. It has not been a comprehensive review (for example environmental, infrastructural, and technological factors have not been considered)[3] but it has highlighted some elements of the context in which social meanings influence transport practices. In the rest of this thesis, I concentrate more completely on social meanings, beginning with definitions in the next section.

2.2 Defining Social Meanings

It is widely accepted that human beings ascribe meanings to social experiences (Miller, 2006). Accordingly, everyday transport is much more than the physical displacement of a person from one location to another; movement carries meaning (Adey, 2010; Bean et al., 2008; Cresswell, 2006; Dennis & Urry, 2009; A. Jensen, 2013). People are able to easily and quickly make judgements about the personal characteristics and journey purpose of complete strangers by observing the way they travel. Someone walking through a busy urban area wearing a suit might be assumed to be a business commuter, someone in a sports car with the roof down might be assumed to be enjoying luxury leisure, and someone waiting at a bus stop in the rain might be assumed unable to drive or too poor to afford a car. These

[3] Discussions of each of these factors are available in wider literature. On the role of built and natural environments in influencing transport practices see especially A. Jensen (2013); van Duppen and Spierings (2013); and McGinn, Evenson, Herring, and Huston (2007). On infrastructure see particularly Pucher, Dill, and Handy (2010), but also Pooley et al. (2013) and Snizek, Nielsen, and Skov-Petersen (2013). On the co-evolution of technology and transport practices see Dennis and Urry (2009); Pooley, Turnbull, and Adams (2006); Sachs (1992); Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012); and Watson (1996).

assumptions may, in any given situation, be right or wrong but when the same assumptions are made by a number of people, or recognised at a broad social level, then they can be considered shared social meanings.

Definitions of what constitutes a *meaning* are tricky, and meaning often appears to elude precise definition—perhaps because to work out what meaning *means* is a somewhat tautological project. However, a meaning is usually considered to be an association or significant connection between two elements. In some meanings one element directly represents another, for example, the word *plant* might represent a green leafy organism (Nöth, 1990; Vannini, 2008). In others, a meaning may refer to a more general "social and symbolic significance" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 23); for example, kitchen appliances in the 1950s were widely regarded as symbols of the modernity of a household that owned them (Wildt, 1995). The definition of meanings as an association between two elements is broad and is best supplemented by looking at ways that meanings have been described in previous research.

I use the term *meanings* following Adey (2010) and Cresswell's (2006) assertions that both places and mobilities have meaning. Places are more than spaces, locations, or sets of coordinates; they have meaning for people (Cresswell, 2006, 2009; T. Hall, 2009; Spinney, 2007). For example, people may associate places with other elements of social life, such as childhood, friends, fear, or a certain atmosphere; as such, places have significance beyond their coordinates or amenity values. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of the concept of place is that for a location to be a place it "necessarily has meaning" (Henderson, 2009, p. 539). Mobility, it has been argued, has meaning in much the same way as place (Adey, 2010; Cresswell, 2006). If we assume that transport practices can be considered under the broader

heading of mobility, it is reasonable to think of transport practices as having meaning in the same ways as mobilities and places more generally. As place is more than a location or a set of coordinates, so transport is more than a way of moving between locations or coordinates.

Although I broadly use the term *meanings* in line with Adey (2010) and Cresswell (2006), some brief clarifications are required. Particularly, I wish to comment on where meanings reside, and whether they necessarily involve cognitive reflection.

In some descriptions of meaning, places or mobilities are described as being "imbued" with meaning (Adey, 2010, p. 34; Cresswell, 2006, p. 3; 2009, p. 176; Spinney, 2007, p. 42). Although this term is perhaps used to imply the inseparability of an object or practice from its meaning, it also obscures the identity of the person doing the imbuing, and the location in which the meaning ultimate resides. Adey (2010) emphasises that different people give different meanings to mobility practices and stresses that "mobility has no pre-existing significance in and of itself. Mobility does not implicitly mean one thing or another" (Adey, 2010, p. 36). This suggests that meaning cannot reside in a practice itself, but must rather reside in the interpretations of practitioners, observers, or other individuals (see also Dittmar, 1992). In this research, I make it clear who is interpreting a practice in a particular way, so as to allow for the possibility of different people interpreting transport practices in different ways.

The use of terms such as *meaning* and *interpretation* suggest cognitive reflection on the part of the agents who are assigning meaning to practices. I take a more expansive view, leaning again on understandings of the meanings associated with place. Contemporary understandings of the concept of place have roots in phenomenology and have connections to non-representational theories, both of which reject the primacy of mind over body and

prioritise sensory perception (Adey, 2010; Cresswell, 2009; Dewsbury, 2009; Gibson & Waitt, 2009; Merriman, 2014; Seamon, 2015). Descriptions of place sometimes acknowledge that meanings may stem more from embodied and sensory encounters than from cognition (Cresswell, 2009; Gibson & Waitt, 2009; Seamon, 2015; Spinney, 2007). We could debate whether a better term than *meaning* might be found for associations that include non-cognitive as well as cognitive elements. However, for the sake of consistency with existing research (including the work of Adey, Cresswell, and Spinney) which does not appear to intend *meaning* in a purely cognitive sense, I resist the urge to adopt new terms.

Finally, for a meaning to be a *social* phenomenon it must be shared. Certainly individuals can ascribe meaning in ways that are not shared, and "perfect mutual understandings" are unlikely to be achieved (Giddens, 1976, p. 104), but in this thesis I am primarily interested in meanings that have the potential to influence large numbers of people because they are commonly interpreted in similar ways. I refer to meanings that are shared or interpreted in similar ways as *social* meanings.

The term *social meanings* refers, then, to an ensemble of shared understandings about the connections between transport practices and other elements of social life. Social meanings often encompass stereotypes and social norms, both of which have been the subject of extensive research, I discuss these two sub-categories of social meaning briefly below.

2.2.1 Stereotypes

In the context of this thesis, stereotypes are usually shared assumptions that people with similar transport practices have other things in common. Stereotypes are usually defined in terms of two principal features: (1) attribution of a person to a social group, and (2) generalizing beliefs about that group. For example, stereotyping may involve attributing

someone who is riding a motorcycle to the group *motorcyclists*, and then expecting that person to share attitudes, or characteristics, or behaviours with other motorcyclists. A motorcyclist might therefore be expected to be a thrill-seeker simply because they belong to the group *motorcyclists.* Attribution to a social group and generalizing beliefs can be seen in a wide variety of definitions of stereotypes (see for example Gatersleben, Murtagh, & White, 2013; D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Pendry, 2008).

We most commonly apply stereotypes to people we do not know personally, and where group membership is easily observed (Gatersleben et al., 2013; D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000; Pendry, 2008). Group membership can be visible through personal characteristics such as skin colour or gender but may also be apparent through how someone travels or through their possession of material objects such as a helmet, bus pass, or car keys. As people get to know one another, these visual symbols become less important and personal knowledge replaces stereotypical generalizations (Gatersleben et al., 2013; D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000; Pendry, 2008). That said, individuals sometimes do link even themselves (the person they know best) to stereotypes through the way they understand their own social identity (Simon & Trötschel, 2008). For example, a person may find a thrill-seeking identity appealing and may intentionally enhance their own reputation and self-identity as a thrill-seeker through motorcycling.

It is often assumed that stereotypes are (1) negative, (2) inaccurate, and (3) widely shared; however, none of these characteristics is essential to my definition of stereotypes (Aldred, 2013a; Devine, 1989; D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Jussim & Rubinstein, 2012). First, stereotypes are not necessarily negative (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Jussim & Rubinstein, 2012); a belief that all members of a particular group are

attractive, or intelligent, or fun is as much a stereotype as a belief that connects members of a group with negative traits. Participants in this research described both negative and positive generalizing beliefs about groups. Second, beliefs about groups commonly have elements of both accuracy and inaccuracy (D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000); I am more interested in how stereotypes influence everyday transport practices than in how accurate they are. Third, individuals may hold their own, unique generalizing beliefs about members of groups, but I remain primarily interested in social meanings that are shared by more than one participant.

2.2.2 Social norms

Social norms are expectations that members of a social group will behave in ways that are considered normal within that group (Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Nijstad & van Knippenberg, 2008; Steg, 2005). Social norms are meanings because they concern associations between practices and other elements of social life. For example, a person who unicycles to work (when others primarily drive cars) might be considered odd. *Not* adhering to social norms—for example by unicycling—often attracts more attention than adhering to norms. Social norms are comparative as they compare practices (or attitudes, or abilities, or appearances) that are considered normal to those that are not considered normal (Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Simon & Trötschel, 2008).

Previous research has identified several different kinds of norms. Descriptive norms refer to how other people usually act, injunctive norms refer to how one should act, and subjective norms refer to pressure to act in the same way as others (Ajzen, 1991; Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). All of these norms help to guide behaviour and organise society (Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Nijstad & van Knippenberg, 2008; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Although norms are often described at a societal level, they can vary between different social groups (Pooley et al., 2013; Tajfel et al., 1971).

Norms emerge and are perpetuated and communicated through social interaction; this means norms are usually widely shared within a particular social group (Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Shove et al., 2012). Even if norms are widely shared, they may not accurately reflect practices. Particularly, *normative misperception* occurs when people cannot observe what others do and so do not have an accurate perception of what is normal (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Litt, Lewis, Linkenbach, Lande, & Neighbors, 2014). For example, if we never see people picking their noses we may assume that nose picking is not normal. We may not even be aware that many people pick their noses in private. Similarly, if car travel is more visibly obvious than other forms of transport (such as walking), we may assume that travelling by car is more normal than it actually is. As with stereotypes, I am more concerned with the influence that social norms have than with whether they are accurate.

Social norms have been shown to influence people's behaviour and self-presentation and even to over-ride other influences such as personal attitudes (Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Miller, 2006; Parker, Manstead, Stradling, Reason, & Baxter, 1992). Social norms have also been shown, by a large number of studies, to be important in a transport context (see for example Aldred, 2010, 2013a; Böhm et al., 2006; Daley & Rissel, 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010; Pooley et al., 2013).

2.2.3 Section summary

The purpose of this section has been to define social meanings. The fundamental characteristic of a meaning is that it concerns an association or significant connection between two elements. Here, social meanings are connections between transport practices and other features of social life. I likened meanings associated with transport to those that differentiate places from spaces. As a place is more than a location or a set of coordinates, so

transport is more than a way of moving between locations. *Social* meanings are those meanings that are similarly understood or interpreted by multiple people.

Stereotypes and social norms both fall under the umbrella heading of social meanings. Stereotypes rely on generalizing beliefs to connect people in particular groups to other shared characteristics; for example, to connect motorcyclists to thrill-seeking. Social norms describe expectations that group members will behave in ways that are considered normal within a group; someone who travels to work by unicycle might be considered odd. I have highlighted these two well-researched types of meaning—stereotypes and social norms—but there are also other types of meanings. For example, associating particular kinds of cars with wealthy owners is, in strict terms, neither a stereotype nor a social norm, but it concerns a widely made connection between a transport practice and another element of social life.

2.3 The Influence of Social Meanings

In this section, I review several concepts and theories to illustrate how social meanings might influence everyday transport practices. Rather than focus on each of many different theoretical perspectives individually, I instead consider three broad debates associated with these theories and relevant to the influence of social meanings. These are whether social meanings influence people through conscious or non-conscious pathways, whether people have the agency to choose their responses or are confined by inflexible structures, and whether understandings of social groups can enhance understandings of the influences of social meanings. Debates around conscious and non-conscious pathways of influence, around structure and agency, and around the role of groups in social life are extensive and reach well beyond this research topic. They do also all help provide a theoretical and conceptual background to the results that follow.

2.3.1 Conscious and non-conscious influences

One of the key debates in terms of the influence of social meanings is around whether meanings influence practices through conscious or non-conscious responses by individuals. In this section, I review several perspectives that contribute to this debate, and conclude that these perspectives can co-exist and can together facilitate understandings of how social meanings might influence transport practices.

Theories based on rational choices place a strong emphasis on conscious decision-making. In theoretical terms, when making a rational choice a person compares all possible alternatives and chooses the one that best meets their needs or most efficiently maximises their utility (Cresswell, 2009; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). To do this requires (1) an awareness of all relevant alternatives, and (2) a conscious consideration of the expected outcomes associated with each alternative. A less theoretically strict stance might accept that a person can make a conscious rational choice between some, but not necessarily all possible alternatives. For example, a person may choose between driving and taking the bus, without considering the possibility of skateboarding.

Whether or not a conscious choice is a rational choice depends on the definition of *rational*. There are many definitions of rational choices (Hodgson, 2012). Some of these imply that any choice can be considered rational given individual preferences (Hodgson, 2012). Other definitions require rational choices to have features such as consistency (Hodgson, 2012). For example, it might not be considered rational to sometimes prefer to drive and sometimes prefer to take the bus (unless circumstances change). Definitions also treat habit differently. Habits may be considered rational if they stem from a conscious choice and minimise the need for ongoing cognitive processing; alternatively habits that prevent reappraisal of changing circumstances may not be considered rational (Heinen, van Wee, &

Maat, 2010; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Van Acker, Van Wee, & Witlox, 2010). Definitions of rationality are beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to note that rational choice theories usually assume that individuals consciously consider alternatives. Relevant to this research in particular, perspectives based on rational choice have long been used to explain why people choose to travel in the ways they do (Adey, 2010; Guell et al., 2012; Røe, 2000; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Spinney, 2009; Steg et al., 2001).

Rational choice models are rarely used to explain the influences of social meanings. More often, rational choice models have been applied in research considering the roles of instrumental factors (such as cost and time) in decision making (Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Spinney, 2009). However, rational choice models can be applied to non-instrumental influences on practices (Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). Responses to social meanings, for example, can be rational (according to most definitions) and so are not necessarily incompatible with rational choice models. For instance, if a person believes that the car they drive influences the first impressions of potential business clients (and perhaps the chances of making a sale), then choosing a car that gives the right impression can be considered a conscious and rational decision.

Conscious choices (whether rational or not) influence practices, but it is also widely accepted that people are not aware of all the influences acting upon them (Gladwell, 2005; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Pendry, 2008; Srull & Wyer, 1979). Marketing and advertising professionals, for instance, have become aware of the importance of non-conscious influences on people's purchasing choices (C. Hamilton & Denniss, 2005; Puchta & Potter, 2004; Shapiro, MacInnis, Heckler, & Perez, 1999; Stokes & Hallett, 1992). For example, it has been demonstrated that when an advertisement was included next to a

piece of text research participants were asked to read, even those participants who did not give conscious attention to the advertisement were more likely to select the advertised product in a later test (Shapiro et al., 1999). Similarly, social psychologists have demonstrated that casually given cues can influence people's attitudes and behaviour without them being aware of the influence (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Pendry, 2008; Srull & Wyer, 1979). For instance, students were asked to construct sentences from a set of words they were given; some students were given words related to kindness, others, words related to hostility (Srull & Wyer, 1979). In a subsequent, and ostensibly unrelated, exercise the students were more likely to characterise a featured individual as either "kind" or "hostile" according to which of the two sets of words they had earlier used (Srull & Wyer, 1979). In the context of the present study, advertisements might influence participants' vehicle choices without their awareness. Likewise, exposure to terms like *loser cruiser* might subtly influence participants' attitudes towards different modes of transport without participants' knowledge.

The concept of *habitus*, popularised by Bourdieu, has also been influential in terms of understanding non-conscious influences on practices (Hitchings, 2012; Sallaz, 2010). Habitus refers to the way in which a person's socialisation appears to embed in them a set of durable tastes, habits, and dispositions that then guide their later choices and practices (Bourdieu, 1984; Clarke et al., 2003; Sallaz, 2010; Setten, 2009). Habitus is understood as neither immutable nor deterministic, however it "ensures that individuals are more inclined to act in some ways than others" (Setten, 2009, p. 1).

Habitus does not amount to conscious comparison of alternatives in the way that rational choice perspectives suggest. As Bourdieu explains, "the schemes of the habitus…owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of

consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466). The influence of habitus is often likened to something feeling natural or as though it is second nature (Hitchings, 2012; Setten, 2009; Shove et al., 2012). Giddens (1984, p. 6) agrees that we have a sense of "practical consciousness" that guides what is done, but not necessarily what is thought or said.

The concept of habitus shares considerable common ground with the concept of social norms, in that both describe individuals being guided towards practices that are appropriate for members of their social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Hewstone & Martin, 2008; Nijstad & van Knippenberg, 2008; Shove et al., 2012; Tajfel et al., 1971). However, people are more likely to respond consciously to norms than to habitus. Norms are usually described as triggering conscious comparative processes. Accordingly, we will see (in chapter 3 and chapter 6) that people sometimes describe being consciously concerned about appearing strange, odd, or deviant for travelling in ways that are not normal. Habitus is more often described as operating on a non-conscious level.

In addition, norms are often understood as less durable and more context specific than habitus. Habitus is usually considered to be the deeply embedded result of extended socialisation; it can be expected to only change slowly. In contrast, experiments in social psychology have demonstrated that norms can exist and change within the timeframe of a short experiment (Hewstone & Martin, 2008). For example, if a person moves from one social group to another during an experiment they may change their behaviour to reflect different norms in the different groups. It may be that we are, and need to be, consciously aware of norms in order to be able to respond when they change.

It can be difficult to research influences on practices that do not exist on a conscious level. For example, interviewing somebody about something they are not consciously aware of is not likely to be effective. Such difficulties have contributed to the development of non-representational theories.

Non-representational theories stem from two sources of unease. First, there is unease relating to the apparent assumption in much social science that thought precedes action; second, there is unease because of a related assumption that talk and texts (and sometimes other forms of representation) can adequately represent non-conscious, or sensed, experiences (Adey, 2010; Anderson, 2009b; Gibson & Waitt, 2009; Latham, 2003; Merriman, 2014; Pile, 2010; Spinney, 2011; Thrift, 2000, 2004). Accordingly, adherents to non-representational theories commonly recommend using research methods that facilitate observing or directly participating in sensed experiences (Adey, 2010; Merriman, 2014; Spinney, 2011).

Non-representational approaches to research have been criticised. In particular, some scholars argue that a need to incorporate the non-representational should not lead to a rejection of that which can be represented (Adey, 2010; Lorimer, 2005). Attempts to avoid a conceptual divorce between the representational and non-representational contributed to the development of more-than-representational theories, which seek to incorporate both registers in research (Adey, 2010; Lorimer, 2005). Some authors also argue that purely representational methods still have value, and that it may be possible to bring elements of non-conscious practices, and of the habitus, into conscious consideration and into a discursive realm for the purposes of research (Hitchings, 2012; Latham, 2003; Merriman, 2014; Middleton, 2010; Spinney, 2011). Importantly though, both habitus and non-representational theories insist that not all influences on practices are mediated by conscious deliberation.

Research on stereotypes provides one final perspective, for this section, on whether social meanings influence practices through conscious or non-conscious pathways. Devine (1989) influentially demonstrates that responses to stereotypes can be so rapid that they could not be consciously mediated. However, she also shows that conscious stereotype suppression is possible (although it takes longer than stereotype activation) (Devine, 1989; Pendry, 2008). In the case of stereotype influence then, we may quite conceivably see both conscious and non-conscious processes mediating the influence of social meanings.

To summarise then, I have described several different perspectives on whether people are consciously aware of the influence of social meanings. For instance, rational choice theories place emphasis on conscious decision making, but marketers and psychologists have demonstrated that research participants can be influenced by factors of which they are not consciously aware. Further, norms are usually described as conscious comparisons that guide behaviour, while at the same time, habitus is understood to similarly guide behaviour but on a non-conscious level. Finally, research has demonstrated that non-conscious and conscious pathways can both mediate the influence of stereotypes.

The different perspectives highlighted here can all facilitate understandings of how social meanings might influence transport practices. For example, in the case of the person who chooses a particular car to intentionally convey a certain image and enhance their business prospects, the influence of social meanings may be overtly conscious. In contrast, the person who rejects a luxury car may not be aware that they have done so because their habitus leads them to view expensive vehicles as vulgar displays of wealth. In further contrast, a parent whose teenage child wants to date someone who rides a motorcycle may immediately make connections to rebellion and anti-social behaviour, but subsequently be

able to consciously supress these stereotypes in favour of meeting the individual and getting to know them personally. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive and I proceed on the basis that influences may be primarily conscious, non-conscious, or most commonly a blend of both.

2.3.2 Structure and agency

This debate primarily concerns the extent to which individuals are confined to acting within the limits of established social structures, compared to the extent to which they are free to choose their own paths. Structures essentially involve systems or patterns in social relations that exist over time (Giddens, 1979)[4]. Many social properties help structure social relations; these can include road networks, laws, and less tangible properties, such as a social requirement to be clothed in public. Rarely do academics adhere either to the view that people are entirely governed by structures, or to the view that they are entirely independent of these; there is, however, a large middle ground in which the relative roles of structure and agency are debated.

To return initially to Bourdieu, habitus is a predominantly structural concept. Deeply embedded in class distinctions, habitus is durable and resistant to change (Bourdieu, 1984; Clarke et al., 2003). Bourdieu does not entirely neglect agency, and denies mechanical determinism, but devotes rather more energy to the internalisation of elements of structure, than to the role of agency (Bourdieu, 1984; Sallaz, 2010; Setten, 2009). Following Bourdieu, we might consider knowledge of, and appropriate responses to, social meanings to be part of a durable structure into which new generations are successfully socialised and from which

[4] This is a considerable simplification but a full discussion of, for example, structure, function, and systems is beyond the scope of this thesis. It will also shortly become apparent that patterns in social relations can be viewed as the outcome of interactions between structure and agency.

deviation is hard to imagine. The validity of this position is supported by evidence that knowledge of stereotypes is consistent across different groups (Devine, 1989), that social meanings often have considerable longevity (Alderson, 1972; Norton, 2007; Shove et al., 2012; Watson, 1996), and that a history of travelling in a certain way is often closely correlated with a future intention to do so (Murtagh et al., 2012b; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011).

In contrast, other perspectives place much more emphasis on individual agency, and particularly on the potential to resist, or to influence, pre-existing structures. For example, de Certeau (1984/2003, p. 260) describes the way individuals make "innumerable and infinitesimal transformations" in structures to adapt them to their own requirements. *Desire lines*, informal pathways worn through surfaces like grass, provide an example of changing structures (van der Burg, 2011). As pedestrians repeatedly follow and maintain these desire lines they adjust the structure of paths embedded in an urban landscape (van der Burg, 2011). Similarly, Simmel (1905/1997) describes the way in which individuals negotiate a unique position between the individual and the collective, being thoroughly part of both. For example, a person can follow a clothing fashion, broadly speaking, whilst also adding touches of their own individual style, which may in turn be adopted by others and become part of the structure of fashion (Simmel, 1905/1997).

People employ numerous tactics that resist or change transport structures. For example, skateboarders skating in the vicinity of "no skateboarding" signs (Collins & Shantz, 2009; Cresswell, 2009), pedestrians and cyclists creating desire lines (Ingold, 2004; van der Burg, 2011; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013) and cyclists ignoring road rules (Aldred, 2013b; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; van

Duppen & Spierings, 2013). People can also resist or change the structures formed by social meanings; for example, they can resist the norm of driving, or adopt a mode of transport that is stereotypically connected with a different social group to their own. If enough people act in ways that contradict established social meanings, then meanings may begin to change.

Not everyone has the same power (or can mobilize the same "means") to change structures (Giddens, 1976, p. 110). De Certeau distinguishes between the intentional *strategies* of the powerful and opportunistic *tactics* of the weak (de Certeau, 1984/2003; Urry, 2000). The examples given in the previous paragraph are tactics—acts committed by those with little systematic structural power. There are also many examples of strategic influences on transport. For example, in the mid-1900s, companies tied to the American car industry systematically set about removing public transport provision and changing the social meanings associated with driving and walking; they did this to facilitate continued and enhanced urban access for motorised vehicles (Dennis & Urry, 2009; Norton, 2007). Such companies bought up, and dismantled, streetcar lines and manipulated the term *jaywalker* to reduce the legitimacy of street use by pedestrians (Dennis & Urry, 2009; Norton, 2007). In a more contemporary context, the vast sums of money spent on advertising cars might also be considered to contribute to the structural dominance of private motorised travel through influencing social norms (Bogdanowicz, 2004; Bradsher, 2002; Goss, 1995; Stokes & Hallett, 1992). The structural dominance of cars is now sometimes associated with a reduction in agency for individuals who might otherwise chose different modes of travel (Hiscock, Macintyre, Kearns, & Ellaway, 2002; Horton, 2007; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Pooley et al., 2013; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Urry, 2006). That different individuals and institutions can be considered to have different amounts of power does not

negate the general premise that all individuals have the agency to resist, influence, or manipulate structures (Giddens, 1976).

If individuals can influence social structures then it follows that there is a mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Shove et al., 2012). Giddens' (1984) *structuration theory* is one position that takes account of this recursive relationship. Social structures influence the practices of individuals and groups, and the practices of individuals and groups influence the reproduction and evolution of social structures (Giddens, 1984; Shove et al., 2012). For example, most people adhere to clothing fashions (to a greater or lesser extent) and fashions provide a guide to what clothing is culturally appropriate. People do have choices within fashion, however, and the agency they express, through the clothes they actually buy and wear, goes on to influence what is available and what is acceptable in subsequent seasons and years (McCracken, 1988; Shove et al., 2012; Simmel, 1905/1997). The same is true of fashions for car, motorcycle, or bicycle designs.

Social practice theories embrace the recursive nature of structure and agency, arguing that practices need to be understood as part of an evolving and holistic system (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Shove et al., 2012). Some practice theories incorporate material structures, immaterial structures (such as social meanings and practical knowledge) and individual agency together, positing that it is the interplay of these features (and others) over time, rather than one or other alone, that both reproduces social structures and frames human agency (Schwanen & Lucas, 2011; Shove et al., 2012).

I take the position that structure and agency are recursive and are both important to everyday transport practices. They are intertwined in a way that means it is sometimes

difficult to identify where agency stops and structure starts (or vice versa). However, in the interests of making my position clear, I can offer some explanatory simplifications. I consider social meanings to be primarily structural within the context of this thesis; my research demonstrates that meanings are often commonly understood across my participant cohort and there is significant evidence to suggest they have considerable longevity. On this basis, they do form a structure to which participants respond.

That is not to say, however, that participants do not have agency or that meanings cannot be changed. Indeed, throughout the thesis I consider the agency of participants in response to the structures with which they are faced. I also make numerous references to the development of social meanings over the history of the transport practices being discussed, demonstrating, in some instances, how practices and meanings have co-evolved through history. Meanings should be considered to be relatively *moored* over the timeframe of this research, compared to some of the other elements of study (Adey, 2010). Indeed, we do need to assume some level of stability in the world in order for research to proceed effectively (Shove et al., 2012).

A more comprehensive perspective could be provided by considering social meanings within a holistic practice framework; but my focused approach stems from a need to draw a line around what is already an extensive topic, particularly due to the inclusion of five modes of transport. For a PhD to be an achievable endeavour boundaries must be drawn; on this occasion, I include all transport modes at the expense of an approach better able to illustrate the interactions between different elements of practices over time. There is considerable precedent for drawing analytically convenient boundaries around complex questions, even within attempts to approach practices holistically (Pooley et al., 2013; Shove et al., 2012).

2.3.3 Social groups

In this section, I consider whether concepts relating to social groups can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices. To have widely shared social meanings requires some degree of social communication and interaction; however, few conceptualisations of the influence of social meanings pay explicit attention to social groups.[5] In this section, I first observe that people are usually simultaneously members of multiple social groups. Subsequently, I consider two different conceptualisations of the influence of social meanings, paying particular attention to how these conceptualisations interpret social groups.

Most people belong to more than one social group. An individual might be a parent; an employee of a company; a resident in a particular community; a member of a sports club, church congregation, or political party; a car driver, and a cyclist (Murtagh et al., 2012a). This multiplicity is important to understanding the influence of social meanings. If a person belongs to different social groups they may be associated with the different stereotypes applied to those groups, and may adhere to the different norms active within them. These stereotypes and norms may be very similar between the different groups an individual is part of, or very different. A person's association with different groups may also influence their understandings of different social meanings, including through their habitus (which forms through socialisation and so is influenced by group membership).

Academic understandings of groups and of social meanings have not always recognised the extent of multiplicity that I acknowledge. Recognition of multiplicity has, broadly speaking, increased over recent decades and this increase has been particularly

[5] Clearly, work on social norms and stereotypes pays attention to groups, work in these fields has already been discussed.

associated with work on subcultures, postmodernism, queer theories, feminism, and postructuralism (Bennett, 1999; Butler, 1999; Clarke et al., 2003; Cloudsley, 2007; Gamson, 2003; Guell et al., 2012; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Law, 1999; Maffesoli, 1996). More recently, mobilities scholars, and those with interests in social practice theories, have endorsed approaches that view group memberships in terms of multiplicity and change, rather than homogeneity and permanency (Adey, 2010; Shove et al., 2012).

Contemporary transport research now often relies heavily on nuanced and multiple conceptions of social groups (see for example Fincham, 2007; Pinch & Reimer, 2012), however, there remains scope for further investigation of such multiplicity. For example, it is disappointingly rare to find research that takes a multi-modal approach to transport that matches the multiplicity evident in practices (Cook et al., 2015). Many individuals use multiple modes of transport as integral parts of their everyday lives (Murtagh et al., 2012a; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Gardner and Abraham (2007, p. 196) demonstrate that people who use multiple modes of transport can sometimes "alternate between identities" when answering questions that focus on different aspects of transport use (see also Dickinson et al., 2009). Much transport literature, however, focuses on just one or two modes of transport (see for example Goodman, Jones, Roberts, Steinbach, & Green, 2013; Heinen et al., 2010; Middleton, 2010; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Steg, 2005).

Two quite different theoretical perspectives on groups can be instructive in understanding how social meanings influence transport practices. First, Veblen's theory of pecuniary emulation helps to explain the influences of social meanings where there is an element of competition. Second, theories of intergroup relations shed light on how members of different social groups relate to one another.

First then, pecuniary emulation. Veblen outlines a form of competitive consumption in which individuals seek to move between hierarchically organised groups based on an appearance of wealth (Veblen, 1899/1934). In practice, a person might buy an expensive car to demonstrate wealth; more specifically, they might seek to buy a more expensive car than someone else to demonstrate their superior position in a social hierarchy. The theory of pecuniary emulation has been extremely influential both in an academic context and in its popularised form, "keeping up with the Joneses" (Bradsher, 2002; Clarke et al., 2003; C. Hamilton & Denniss, 2005; McCracken, 1988; McKendrick, 1983; Stokes & Hallett, 1992). The theory explains that people aspire to move through a progression of hierarchically organised social groups towards those that are associated with more highly regarded meanings (Veblen, 1899/1934).

The theory of pecuniary emulation has been criticised for its reliance on a single hierarchy of groups (Clarke et al., 2003; McCracken, 1988). It does not acknowledge that people are members of different groups that respond to social meanings in different ways. It cannot, for example, explain why some people aspire to demonstrate their wealth through expensive cars, while others choose jewellery, or property, or works of art. It is even less well equipped to explain why some people apparently choose not to overtly demonstrate their wealth at all, why some choose not to accumulate wealth in the first place, and why some emulate those of lower income and status than themselves (Austin, Gagne, & Orend, 2010; Fine & Leopold, 1990). Although these criticisms are valid, the theory does appear to underlie contemporary discourse about status (discussed in more detail in section 3.1.4). In addition, although Veblen only conceptualised one kind of emulation, the same principle can be applied to other kinds of competition; for example, competition to appear fitter, more

cunning, or even less materialistic than others. The theory of pecuniary emulation can, then, help to explain influences of social meanings where there is an element of competition.

Second, theories of intergroup relations can help to explain how members of different groups relate to one another. Wide ranging studies, primarily in social psychology, have demonstrated that simply belonging to a group (regardless of the characteristics of the group) can influence behaviour (Brewer, 1999; Lickel & Gupta, 2013; Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990; Simon & Trötschel, 2008; Tajfel et al., 1971). These studies have shown that where *groupness* (an expectation of difference between *us* and *them*) exists, individuals view the *in-group* (us) differently to the *out-group* (them). Research participants have been shown to exhibit a clear preference for their in-group even when a division into groups is entirely arbitrary (Tajfel et al., 1971; Turner, 1982). People apply more positive social meanings to their in-groups than their out-groups (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Perdue et al., 1990).

Intergroup relations are also linked to attribution biases (Hewstone & Turner, 2010). People attribute positive behaviour to the personal characteristics of in-group members, and negative behaviour to elements of the external situation (Hewstone & Turner, 2010). For example, cyclists might describe other cyclists as cycling for positive, morally laudable reasons, but describe their rule-breaking as a consequence of poorly designed infrastructure. In contrast, people attribute the positive behaviour of out-group members to the external situation, and negative behaviour to their personal characteristics (Hewstone & Turner, 2010). For example, a non-motorcyclist might describe motorcyclists as only obeying speed limits in the presence of speed cameras, when their personal character leads them to irresponsible speeding. Recognising such attribution biases may facilitate understandings of the way different groups of road users interact (Basford et al., 2002; Musselwhite et al.,

2012). Proponents of theories of intergroup relations acknowledge that people who are in the same in-group in one context may be in one another's out-groups in another (Brewer, 1999; Tajfel et al., 1971). This is particularly important in a context in which most people use more than one mode of transport.

In a transport context, some research has acknowledged the importance of in-groups and out-groups in relationships between different transport users (Aldred, 2013a; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; McCarthy, 2011; Musselwhite et al., 2012). This theory has been particularly applied to the relationship between cyclists and car drivers, who are described as negatively stereotyping one another (Aldred, 2013a; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; McCarthy, 2011).

I take the perspective that social groups play important roles in terms of the influence of social meanings. Most individuals are members of multiple different social groups, and those groups may associate (and be associated with) different social meanings. Both theories of intergroup relations and of emulation can help to explain how social meanings influence transport practices.

2.3.4 Section summary

In this section, I have reviewed some of the key cross-cutting features and debates associated with ways in which social meanings may influence transport practices. In particular, I considered whether the influence of social meanings is mediated by conscious or non-conscious thought processes, and concluded that both are possible and likely. I also described debates around the extent to which individuals are confined to acting within the limits of established social structures compared to exercising their own agency. I consider structure and agency important and recursive; I consider social meanings to be primarily

structural in the context and time-frame of the research reported. Further, I looked at social groups and concluded that individuals have multiple and evolving group memberships. Theories of intergroup relations and of emulation are particularly useful to the results presented later.

2.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have set out some of the perspectives underlying the approach I take in this research. First, I explained that transport practices are multiply determined and reviewed some of the factors, aside from social meanings, that influence transport practices. I focused on instrumental factors, habit, affect, embodied experiences, and mobilities scholarship. I respect the considerable amount of high quality research that is being completed in those fields; but going forward in this thesis I restrict my focus to social meanings.

Second, I defined social meanings. My definition has two main features. First, a social meaning exists when transport is understood as being more than a method of locomotion and is connected to other features of social life. Second, a meaning must be shared or similarly interpreted by multiple people for it to be a *social* meaning. *Social meanings* is an umbrella term that encompasses stereotypes and social norms but can also include other kinds of meanings such as references to social hierarchies.

Social meanings can influence people's everyday transport practices in a number of different ways. I have outlined several of the important debates underlying understandings of the mechanisms through which social meanings may influence practices. I have explained how social meanings may influence practices through both conscious and non-conscious pathways. I have also sketched a broad outline of debates concerning structure and agency,

and have concluded that structure and agency are recursive, intertwined, and sometimes difficult to demarcate. That said, I have argued that, in the context of this research, I see social meanings as primarily structural due to their considerable longevity and common interpretation. I have also briefly explored the role of social groups in mediating the influences of social meanings. I have argued that group memberships are multiple and changing, and that theories of intergroup relations and pecuniary emulation can help us to understand the influences of social meanings. Throughout this thesis, I refer back to the debates reviewed here to help explain the influences of social meanings on transport practices.

Chapter 3: Social Meanings and Transport

In the last chapter, I explained what social meanings are and how they might influence everyday transport practices. In this chapter, I go on to explore the social meanings that extant literature connects with different modes of transport. I focus on five modes of transport: driving, cycling, motorcycling, bus use, and walking.[6] I discuss each mode largely in isolation from the others. This structuring device facilitates a comprehensible review but simultaneously distracts attention from the coexistence of the different modes. I consider cross-cutting meanings and their implications in more detail later in the thesis.

Most of the sources discussed in this chapter do not explicitly focus on the social meanings associated with transport. Some of them critically investigate a small range of social meanings, others apparently tacitly reproduce existing understandings. By bringing different sources together, and evaluating their relative positions, it is possible to start assembling an overview of commonly shared social meanings.

Before proceeding, it is appropriate to say a couple of words about the contextual origins of the literature reviewed. The vast majority of this literature has been undertaken in developed contexts in Europe, North America, and Australasia. Within that literature, I am aware of very little that considers transport from indigenous, or minority, cultural perspectives. The literature reviewed is largely a reflection of geographical, political, and cultural biases in the conduct and reporting of academic research. These biases influence research on social meanings, as well as research more widely in a variety of areas of scholarship. In one sense, these biases are quite helpful in the context of my own research

[6] These five modes of transport remain the focus throughout this thesis and the reason for their selection is discussed early in chapter 4.

because Christchurch closely resembles many of these other sites in terms of majority culture, transport history, and economic development. On the other hand, the similarity between my own findings and the picture collaged here from the literature may obscure some more significant cultural and geographical differences between different contexts. This is especially important if the literature review is used to signal the likely wider applicability of the findings and recommendations found later in this research; I return to this issue in chapter 8.

3.1 Driving

Cars and driving are widely acknowledged as having a cultural importance that extends well beyond their utility value (Gatersleben, 2011; Merriman, 2009; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Steg, 2005; Urry, 2006). Part of this cultural importance relates to the existence of strong and pervasive social meanings associated with driving and cars (see for example Gatersleben, 2011; Law, 1999; Stokes & Hallett, 1992; Vodafone New Zealand, 2012; Williams, 2012). Cars provide excellent carriers for social meanings because they are large, mobile, and prevalent, and so are highly visible within a society (Bishop, 1996; Gatersleben, 2011, 2012; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006).

Moving forward, I explore the social meanings that are detailed in academic literature regarding car use. I begin by considering the difference between social meanings associated with driving and those associated with different subgroups of drivers. I go on to briefly discuss an overall social norm of driving for transport, and then to investigate some of the gendered social meanings associated with driving. I later consider the connection between cars and status. I argue that although this connection is commonly made, the meaning of status has changed over time and is still changing. Finally, I report on the demographic

groups that are considered most likely to be influenced by social meanings associated with drivers or driving.

3.1.1 Driving or driver subgroups?

Social meanings can be associated either with all people who engage in a practice or with subgroups of its practitioners. In the context of driving, social meanings can be associated with all drivers, and so apparently with driving per se. In contrast, meanings might be associated just with subgroups of drivers; for example, people who drive particular kinds of vehicles, have certain characteristics in common, or drive in particular ways. Most commonly, social meanings are associated with subgroups of drivers rather than with all drivers.

Meanings most commonly adhere to subgroups of drivers because car use is very widespread. The relationship between cars and status provides a good example. Early in the history of driving, driving any car was a symbol of status (Sachs, 1992), however, things that become widely available usually cease to be status symbols (Dittmar, 1992). Accordingly, as cars became available to a wider swathe of people in developed nations, so driving per se "lost [its] differentiating power as a symbol" (Sachs, 1992, p. 181).

Although driving ceased to be associated with status, drivers of some cars retained that association. As the number of cars in circulation increased, so did distinctions between different kinds of cars (Bradsher, 2002; Hebdige, 1988; Sachs, 1992). Some cars were not widely available, and owners of those vehicles may still have been associated with status. More generally, and in line with stereotype literature, it is likely that as people encountered more drivers, and themselves joined this growing group, so social meanings became more differentiated and began to adhere to smaller subgroups of drivers (Gatersleben et al., 2013;

D. L. Hamilton & Uhles, 2000; Perdue et al., 1990).[7] In contemporary literature (particularly from developed country contexts), driving is usually now described as a social norm and different groups of drivers are associated with varied and nuanced social meanings.

Different kinds of cars are particularly associated with different social meanings, however, this has been the subject of relatively little social science research. Wells, Andriuli, Goi, and Seader (1957) provide a notable exception with their comparison of the stereotypical characteristics of owners of Cadillacs, Buicks, Fords, Chevrolets, and Plymouths. In contemporary literature, however, there are few such comprehensive comparisons. Several studies have compared a small number of alternatives, such as a sports car and a large four-wheel drive vehicle, or a hybrid car and a luxury car, (Gatersleben, 2011, 2012; Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Kingham & Donahoe, 2002; Meaton & Kingham, 1998). There has also been some more detailed consideration of the social meanings associated with sports utility vehicles (or SUVs) and especially their use in urban areas. These vehicles are associated with youth, power, vanity, fantasies of adventure and wilderness mastery, freedom, and, in contrast, are considered by some to be symbols of an environmentally destructive car culture (Bishop, 1996; Böhm et al., 2006; Bradsher, 2002; Gatersleben, 2011; Ghurbal, 2008).

Different groups of drivers are also sometimes featured in literature. For example, boy racers have been the subject of some research (Falconer & Kingham, 2007; Lumsden, 2013), and differences between male and female drivers sometimes feature (Berger, 1986;

[7] There is some irony in that Ford's mass production of cars is credited both with having "democratized" car ownership (Sheller & Urry, 2000, p. 737) and with having facilitated the mass consumption that enabled widespread differentiation between people based on the kind of vehicle they drove (Bradsher, 2002; Hebdige, 1988; Sachs, 1992; Watson, 1996).

Schwanen, 2011; Waitt, Harada, & Duffy, 2015; Yeung & von Hippel, 2008). The majority of the literature reviewed in this chapter, however, makes, at most, passing reference to different groups of drivers or to car types, makes, or models (Barker, 2014; Bergstad et al., 2011; Gatersleben, 2011; Hiscock et al., 2002; Lois & López-Sáez, 2009; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Steg, 2005; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011). This review focuses on those meanings that have been highlighted in literature while acknowledging that there is a considerably wider, but largely unreported, range of social meanings associated with different vehicles and different groups of drivers.

3.1.2 Social norms and automobility

Academics commonly refer to driving as a social norm (Horton, 2007; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010; Pooley et al., 2013). In developed countries at least, it is normal to drive and car use "has come to appear universal and incontestable" (Böhm et al., 2006, p. 5). Car use has become so common in many parts of the world that travelling in other ways is sometimes described as "abnormal" (Pooley et al., 2013, p. 125), "deviant" (Böhm et al., 2006, p. 8; Horton, 2007, p. 146), or "eccentric" (Hiscock et al., 2002, p. 131).[8] This norm is so complete, and taken for granted, that it often only becomes apparent when discussing other modes of transport (Bean et al., 2008; Hiscock et al., 2002; Horton, 2007; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Pooley et al., 2013). For example, when researching walking or cycling it may become apparent that, for some people, not driving is almost unimaginable (Bean et al., 2008).

Car use is strongly linked to social meanings around freedom and independence but mass car use may challenge these associations (Böhm et al., 2006; Dennis & Urry, 2009;

[8] Although it is worth noting that Cupples and Ridley (2008, p. 257) highlight the "othering" of car users as "vicious and dysfunctional" in some cycling advocacy contexts.

Waitt et al., 2015). Recently, recognition has been growing—particularly amongst transport researchers in developed country contexts—that a strong social norm of car use, and the stringent road rules required to manage the resulting traffic volumes, can restrict *how* a person drives and their freedom to use other modes of transport (Böhm et al., 2006; Hiscock et al., 2002; Horton, 2007; M. Jensen, 1999; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Pooley et al., 2013; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Urry, 2000, 2006).

Although social norms usually encourage car use, they may also discourage it. Weinberger and Goetzke (2011) demonstrate that when living in a neighbourhood without a strong norm of car use, individuals are more likely to reject car ownership. Further, norms of car use may be being eroded (particularly in response to environmental awareness), and this may be contributing to reductions in car use (Green, Steinbach, & Datta, 2012; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Investigations of the notion of "peak car" have demonstrated reductions in car use in numerous countries and regions (Goodwin, 2012; Goodwin & Van Dender, 2013). The impact on a social norm of car use has not yet been widely demonstrated but there are some indications of changing norms amongst certain social groups, particularly young people and those with high levels of income and education (Goodwin & Van Dender, 2013; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011).

Automobility is a concept that embraces and extends ideas around the norm of car use. Definitions of automobility vary, but they commonly describe automobility in terms of the socio-technical dominance of the automobile, and how this dominance has transformed social life (Aldred, 2010; Bean et al., 2008; Böhm et al., 2006; Flink, 1975; Green et al., 2012; Pooley, 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Urry, 2006). Automobility, although a wider notion than

norms, underscores a broad acceptance that car use is a numerically and culturally dominant practice of mobility, at least in developed countries.

3.1.3 Gender

Despite being very normal in many societies, driving has always been a substantially gendered practice (Berger, 1986; Law, 1999, 2002; Schwanen, 2011; Shove et al., 2012; Urry, 2006; Waitt et al., 2015; Watson, 1996). In contemporary New Zealand, women, on average, drive only two thirds of the distance that men drive in a year, and men in all age groups drive more than women of the same age (Ministry of Transport, 2015b). Yeung and von Hippel (2008) report that, in an Australian context, when couples travel together the driving is usually done by the man.[9] Indeed, transport has a "deep-seated and wide-ranging connection to gender distinctions, as everyone who has ever heard a joke about women drivers or noted the prevalence of images of trucks and cars on clothing for little boys will recognize" (Law, 1999, p. 579). Despite this, "the symbolic and subjective aspects of gender have been largely neglected in transport geography" (Law, 2002, p. 427).

The paucity of literature around gender and transport has been starting to change (Schwanen, 2011), but few of the commonly recognised associations between driving and gendered social meanings have been the focus of empirical research. Here, I draw out some of the differences that literature does detail between the social meanings associated with male and female drivers.

Driving is commonly associated with masculinity and is often described as a fundamentally male activity. Driving is associated with male authority in households, male predomination of driving and car maintenance, and male identity and self-esteem (Adler &

[9] There is an assumption of heterosexuality here although this is not explicitly discussed.

Rottunda, 2006; Ellaway, Macintyre, Hiscock, & Kearns, 2003; Waitt et al., 2015; Watson, 1996; Yeung & von Hippel, 2008). Some cars have also been likened to male genitalia and been described as symbols of virility (Bradsher, 2002; Dittmar, 1992; Ellis, 1989; Lane & Sternberg, 1985). Reinforcing the link between driving and masculinity are long standing notions of physical and technical competence (Shove et al., 2012; Waitt et al., 2015; Watson, 1996). Berger (1986, p. 257) reports: "Everything about the car seemed masculine, from the coordination and strength required to operate it, to the dirt and grease connected with its maintenance".

Stereotypically, male drivers are described as powerful and competent; in contrast, female drivers are more commonly associated with a lack of both mechanical and driving expertise (Berger, 1986; Shove et al., 2012; Waitt et al., 2015; Watson, 1996). Berger (1986) argues that, in the US in the early twentieth century, negative stereotypes were intentionally popularised to restrict women's mobility and preserve traditional family roles. Writing in the 1980s, he suggested that the stereotype of women as bad drivers still existed, but "probably more as a joke than a believable stereotype" (Berger, 1986, p. 262). More recent research in Australia suggests, however, that the stereotype still has considerable influence. Yeung and von Hippel (2008) demonstrate that being reminded of stereotypes that women are bad drivers can significantly compromise women's performances in driving simulation exercises.

Men and women are also sometimes associated with different kinds of vehicles (Berger, 1986; Gatersleben, 2012; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Urry, 2006). Berger (1986) argues that, because of stereotypes about their competency and needs, historically women were thought to be suited to smaller, mechanically simpler, cleaner, shorter range electric vehicles. Urry (2006) also briefly mentions women historically having smaller cars than men but

attributes this mainly to issues around cost rather than social meanings. The extent to which the association between women and small cars continues is unclear from literature. Contemporary literature does, however, specifically link men (and not women) to fantasies of conspicuous car use that most commonly focus on SUVs, sports cars, and classic vehicles (Bishop, 1996; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2000; Urry, 2006).

3.1.4 Status

Cars and driving have both been widely linked to status and prestige (Bergstad et al., 2011; Gatersleben, 2011; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Sachs, 1992; Steg, 2005; Stokes & Hallett, 1992; Urry, 2000; Watson, 1996).[10] More emphatically, status is probably the most commonly raised social meaning relating to transport. Status is rarely defined in literature but here I describe some of the different understandings of status that have been associated with cars and driving. As a general rule, understandings of status have changed over time from those that were based on class distinctions, to wealth and profession, and more recently perhaps to understandings that incorporate a diverse range of statuses, including environmental status and the status of a boy racer. In this section, I review the association between cars and status, focusing on the historical evolution of that association.

Historically focused literature demonstrates that early associations between cars and status emphasised class-based status and hereditary social elites (Berger, 1986; Norton, 2007; Shove et al., 2012; Tinkler & Warsh, 2008). Literature with a more recent focus suggests that class-based understandings of status declined in prominence through the twentieth century. By the end of the 1980s, these appear to have been substantially supplanted by other understandings of status (Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Watson, 1996). This move away from class-based status reflects wider social, political, and historical currents (Shaw & Docherty,

[10] Hereafter, I use status as shorthand for status and prestige.

2014b). Similarly, associations of driving with the status of being modern[11] have virtually disappeared in European, North American, and Australasian contexts; there is some evidence that driving status remains associated with modernity in some South American and Asian nations, perhaps due to lower levels of access to driving (Albert de la Bruheze, 2000; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Pooley, 2009; Tinkler & Warsh, 2008; Urry, 2000; Wells et al., 1957).

Increasingly, understandings of status have become focused on accumulated wealth. During the 1980s in particular, cars became symbols of economic mobility (Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Watson, 1996). In contemporary literature, many understandings of the status associated with cars focus on wealth (Gatersleben, 2011; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Murtagh et al., 2012a; Pooley et al., 2013; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011; Wright & Egan, 2000).

Professional accomplishment is closely associated with accumulated wealth; accordingly, it has become a frequent component of understandings of driving status (Ellaway et al., 2003; Ellis, 1989; Gatersleben, 2011, 2012; Griskevicius et al., 2010; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010; Pooley et al., 2013; Stokes & Hallett, 1992; Wells et al., 1957). The concept of "car owning careers" (Mann & Abraham, 2006, p. 169) emphasises the link between wealth and professional accomplishment. It describes how increasing professional accomplishment over the life course is associated with cars of gradually increasing value (Ellis, 1989; Mann & Abraham, 2006). The idea of car

[11] Again, the term *modern* is rarely explicitly defined, but often appears connected to adoption of new technologies, economic growth, affluence, efficiency, and increased material consumption (T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Tinkler & Warsh, 2008).

careers is also linked to notions of coming of age. The attainment of a driving licence has been described as a rite of passage, and its retention as an expected part of an adult status (Barker, 2014; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Dennis & Urry, 2009; Freund & Martin, 2004; Hiscock et al., 2002; M. Jensen, 1999; Lane & Sternberg, 1985; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Murtagh et al., 2012a; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Stokes & Hallett, 1992).

Wealth, profession, and adulthood have been prominent features of recent understandings of status. Other features of social life are, however, also sometimes associated with status. Some authors, for example, describe status as being expressed through, or associated with, masculinity, safety, speed, excitement, educational level, freedom, influence, power, and superiority (Gatersleben, 2011; Hiscock et al., 2002; Sadalla & Krull, 1995; Sheller & Urry, 2000). It is not always clear how these very different features of social life are incorporated into understandings of status, but all can be described as being associated with hierarchies through which a person might aspire to progress. For example, a person might aspire to be more masculine, more exciting, or more powerful than they are currently (or than are significant other people). Some understandings of status may, therefore, hinge on the idea—as expressed in Veblen's (1899/1934) theory of pecuniary emulation—that individuals seek to move between hierarchically organised groups. In this context, status may be more about an understanding of hierarchies than about association with any particular feature of social life.

Further, and primarily in the last ten years, status has been increasingly related to the specific aspirations of members of different social groups (Barker, 2014; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Lumsden, 2013; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Stokes & Hallett, 1992; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011). Shaw and Docherty comment:

> While for certain socioeconomic groups a manifestation of status might be a top-of-the-range BMW or Audi (with plenty of room for the golf clubs), for others it will be [a] souped-up Vauxhall Corsa complete with ludicrously bass-heavy sound system and blue LED lights that illuminate the road. (2014b, p. 76)

Other authors agree that status can be demonstrated in different ways in different social groups. For example, dependent on the values of group members, status can be derived from a particularly safe car, or a boy racer car, or indeed from *not* owning a car (Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Lumsden, 2013; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011).

The position of environmental status in the newly diversified literature remains unclear at present. Some authors claim that environmental behaviours or purchases can carry status, and so not owning or driving a car can be a claim to environmental status (Green et al., 2012; Griskevicius et al., 2010). Most, however, hold environmentalism to be distinct from, and even in conflict with, status (Griskevicius et al., 2010; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Sadalla & Krull, 1995). In a further twist, environmental choices can be seen as a public demonstration that one is sufficiently wealthy to behave in an altruistic manner (Griskevicius et al., 2010). This position conflates environmental and wealth-based status.

These newer, differentiated, approaches to status remain few compared to work that takes for granted the idea that cars are a symbol of wealth and profession-based status. The recent research does, however, follow the more generalized trend in the social sciences of a trajectory away from notions of homogeneity and stability in practices and identities (as discussed in sections 2.1.5 and 2.3.3).

Overall, participants in talk-based research about driving and cars report little concern for status, but there is considerable evidence of under-reporting and of self-presentation effects confounding the results (Hiscock et al., 2002; M. Jensen, 1999; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Steg et al., 2001). It may be easier to observe the influences of status concerns in experimental, rather than talk-based research, and several experimental studies have demonstrated that status concerns have a measurable impact on car purchase decisions and driving practices (Doob & Gross, 1968; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006).

In summary, the available research strongly indicates that cars are associated with status. It also indicates that taken-for-granted understandings of the nature of status have changed over time and appear to be changing still. Historically, class and modernity were considered important elements of status associations with driving. In contemporary literature, status is more likely to be understood in terms of some combination of wealth, professional accomplishment, and adulthood. Very recently, we have seen moves towards more diverse and multiple understandings of what qualifies as status. Status does appear to be important to transport practices, but attempts to examine the connection between status and transport practices have been hampered by self-presentation effects and likely under-reporting.

3.1.5 Influence and demographics

There is some agreement as to which groups are most and least influenced by social meanings associated with cars and driving. First, men are commonly found to be more concerned with such social meanings than are women (Bergstad et al., 2011; Ellaway et al., 2003; Hiscock et al., 2002; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Steg, 2005). Second, younger people are sometimes described as more concerned about symbolic features of vehicles than are older people (Gatersleben, 2011; Johansson-Stenman

& Martinsson, 2006; Steg, 2005). Third, people with lower incomes and lower levels of educational attainment have been associated with higher concern for the status and symbolism displayed by cars (Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Steg, 2005; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011). Fourth, people who own newer cars, or are more materialistic, may be more concerned about the status associated with their vehicles than those who own older cars or are less materialistic (Gatersleben, 2011; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006). Finally, conflicting hypotheses have been raised with regard to urban and rural populations; Bergstad et al. (2011) suggest that rural and semi-rural living is more associated with instrumental motives for car use rather than social meanings, but Johansson-Stenman and Martinsson (2006) posit that rural living is more conducive to status comparisons than urban living surrounded by anonymous strangers. Further comparative research would be needed to establish the validity of either (or both) of these hypotheses.

3.1.6 Section summary

In this section, I have reviewed several of the social meanings associated with cars and with driving. I argued that driving is a major social norm, and I described both social norms and automobility as encouraging car use and hindering more diverse transport practices. Other social meanings are more often associated with subgroups of drivers. I described driving as a gendered practice. Particularly, I noted that social meanings associated with male and female drivers are quite distinct, with male drivers often being described in terms of power and competency, and female drivers being associated with low competence, and as a result, small, simple vehicles. I then discussed the strong connection between driving, cars, and status, and highlighted how understandings of status have evolved over time, particularly from a focus on class, to a focus on wealth and profession, and perhaps to

more differentiated understandings of status in recent years. Finally, I reported that younger people, males, and people on lower incomes and with lower levels of education may be most likely to be influenced by social meanings around cars and driving.

3.2 Cycling

Cycling, like driving, is associated with a range of different social meanings; this section reviews the meanings with which cycling has been associated in literature. I begin by considering social norms and cycling, and then move on to look at the different social meanings that are associated with cycling from necessity compared to choosing to cycle. I also outline some of the social meanings associated with rule breaking behaviour by cyclists and with risk and vulnerability.

3.2.1 Social norms and demographics

In many developed contexts, including Christchurch, cycling for transport was very common for several decades during the 1900s, but is now much more rare (Albert de la Bruheze, 2000; Aldred, 2010, 2013a; Dickinson & Robbins, 2009; Horton, 2007; Kingham et al., 2011; Pooley et al., 2013; Watson, 1996). As a widespread social norm of cycling has eroded, so cycling has become more often stigmatised or othered (Aldred, 2010, 2013a; Horton, 2007; McCarthy, 2011; Pooley et al., 2013).[12] In some developed contexts—such as parts of the Netherlands (Albert de la Bruheze, 2000) and Denmark (A. Jensen, 2013)—a strong social norm of cycling persists. In others—such as much of the US (Lugo, 2013; McCarthy, 2011) and UK (Aldred, 2013a; Horton, 2007; Pooley et al., 2013)—cyclists have been described as deviant, mad, eccentric, and on the fringe of society. Such stigmatising can be a significant disincentive to cycling (Böhm et al., 2006; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Horton, 2007; McCarthy, 2011; Pooley et al., 2013). Cycling is also sometimes represented as a

[12] People or practices are *othered* when they are categorised as deviant and different (Aldred, 2013a).

specialist or elite activity, requiring particular skills, equipment, and clothing, rather than as a normal mode of transport that can be used by almost anyone (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Goodman, Green, & Woodcock, 2014; Pooley et al., 2013; Woodman, 2013).

Irrespective of whether or not cycling is considered normal overall in a particular time and place, norms of cycling differ substantially between different demographic groups. Young people and males usually cycle more, and are more commonly associated with cycling than are older people and women (Aldred, 2013a; Aldred, Woodcock, & Goodman, 2014; Heinen et al., 2010; T. Jones, 2014; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Kingham et al., 2011; Pooley et al., 2013; Rimano et al., 2015). This disparity appears to reduce in times and places where cycling is more normal, but it has been observed in a wide variety of situations and over the entire history of cycling (Alderson, 1972; Aldred et al., 2014; Heinen et al., 2010; A. Jensen, 2013; Pooley et al., 2013; Pooley et al., 2006). Recently, authors have also noted lower rates of cycling among ethnic minorities (Green et al., 2012; A. Jensen, 2013; McCarthy, 2011; Steinbach et al., 2011). Their research has primarily taken place in cities with predominantly white populations; further research in locations with more diverse ethnic characteristics would be needed to provide clearer understandings of any ethnic cycling norms.

Cycling has been associated with both high and low social status, depending on the context. In some situations, those with high status (particularly in terms of wealth, profession, class, and educational level) reportedly cycle more than those with lower status, but elsewhere the inverse is true (Alderson, 1972; Aldred, 2013a; de Geus, De Bourdeaudhuij, Jannes, & Meeusen, 2008; A. Jensen, 2013). Sometimes research finds evidence of both high

and low status cycling in slightly different contexts (Daley & Rissel, 2011; Heinen et al., 2010; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Steinbach et al., 2011).

The crux of the different statuses accorded to cycling may be the extent to which cycling is perceived to be a necessity or a choice. Cycling because of an inability to afford a car may be more routinely associated with people in lower positions in social hierarchies, while leisure cycling—or choosing to cycle for transport instead of using an available car—may be connected to higher positions (T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Pooley et al., 2013). There may be geographical differences in the prevalence of these two associations; for example, cycling may be more associated with high social status where most people can afford to choose how to travel, and more associated with low social status where a choice is less taken-for-granted. There is some evidence, though to suggest the co-existence of both associations in diverse contexts, for example in Pelotas, Brazil, and in London, England (T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Steinbach et al., 2011).

Differences between cycling from necessity or choice may account for some of the differences in the status accorded to cycling in different contexts. There are some indications, however, of more complex relationships. For example, Aldred (2013b) describes commuting as having the highest status amongst types of cycling in the UK, benefiting from the legitimacy accorded by being purposeful, utilitarian, and associated with economic productivity. Daley and Rissel (2011, p. 215), in contrast, describe recreational cycling as being more mainstream and so closer to the top of an "acceptability hierarchy" in Australia. They found commuter cycling to lie near the bottom of the hierarchy, particularly tarnished by a reputation for breaking rules and taking risks. In a review of cycling literature, Heinen et al. (2010) conclude that there is insufficient evidence to draw comprehensive conclusions

about associations between cycling and socio-economic status. It seems particularly likely that a range of different factors—including the perceived status of cycling, but also other factors including urban form, employment norms, family responsibilities, government transport priorities, and more—combine to influence social norms associated with cycling in different social groups.

3.2.2 Choosing to cycle

Cycling is sometimes described as an economic necessity for those people who are unable to afford most other modes of transport (Aldred, 2012, 2013a; Dickinson et al., 2009; A. Jensen, 2013; M. Jensen, 1999; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Lugo, 2013; Pooley et al., 2013; Steinbach et al., 2011). This can lead to cycling being seen as incompatible with a respectable, affluent, competent, and professional status (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Rimano et al., 2015). Accordingly, associations with necessity and poverty may discourage cycling (Alderson, 1972; Aldred, 2013a; Pooley et al., 2013).

Although cycling is sometimes portrayed as a necessity, in developed cities it is more often described as a choice (Aldred, 2012; McCarthy, 2011). Where cycling is a choice, researchers report that research participants often connect cycling to notions of freedom and independence (Green et al., 2012; Rimano et al., 2015; Steinbach et al., 2011). Choosing to cycle is also associated with leisure, health, and environmental concerns.

Choosing to cycle is more often associated with leisure than with transport. For most of its history, cycling has been used for both purposes, and it is likely that leisure and utility are often blended (Alderson, 1972; Aldred, 2012; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Dickinson & Robbins, 2009; A. Jones et al., 2012; Pooley et al., 2013; Root et al., 1996; Shaw &

Docherty, 2014b; Shove et al., 2012; Spinney, 2011). Leisure cycling is associated with characteristics such as fun, sociability, and café stops and these are prominent in descriptions of leisure cycling (Aldred, 2012, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Popan, 2014; Rimano et al., 2015). In addition, leisure cyclists are less likely to be categorised as mad or eccentric than people who regularly commute by bicycle; this may result from perceptions that leisure cyclists can avoid traffic danger more easily than can transport cyclists (Daley & Rissel, 2011; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Pooley et al., 2013).

Sport cycling is associated with different meanings to either utility or leisure cycling. Sport cycling is particularly associated with expensive bicycles, specialist clothing, and extreme dedication (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Lugo, 2013; Pooley et al., 2013). In some contexts, sport cycling has a relatively high status, but elsewhere it is stigmatised, especially through its association with Lycra clothing and with a heightened visibility of body shape (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013). Fitness and thinness are usually viewed positively, but visibly sub-optimal physical condition can result in derision and may be connected to wider notions of socially inferior performance (Aldred, 2013a; Horton, 2007; Steinbach et al., 2011; Wellard, 2002).

Beyond body shape, cycling is described as a healthy activity. Riding a bicycle is often described as a way to maintain or improve one's health (Aldred, 2012; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Green et al., 2012; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Kingham et al., 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Pooley et al., 2013; Rimano et al., 2015; Rissel, Bonfiglioli, Emilson, & Smith, 2010; Steinbach et al., 2011). Cycling for health may be particularly associated with wealthy populations and also to an increasing neoliberalisation of exercise that promotes a

sense of personal responsibility for health and a sense of guilt for unhealthy practices (Aldred, 2010, 2013a; Book, 2014; Cupples & Ridley, 2008; Heinen et al., 2010). Thus while cycling remains primarily considered an activity of choice, it can also be associated with responsibility and guilt.

Where car use is dominant, choosing to cycle is very widely assumed to be motivated by a personal environmental commitment (Aldred, 2010, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Green et al., 2012; Pooley et al., 2013). Such environmentalism is often framed positively, as being associated with morally laudable behaviour (Cupples & Ridley, 2008; Green et al., 2012); it can also, however, be described in negative terms, denoting extremism and sanctimoniousness (Aldred, 2010; Bogdanowicz, 2004; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Steinbach et al., 2011). Recent research has suggested that cycling is associated with positive, morally laudable, environmental responsibility; while cyclists themselves attract the more negative representations associated with militant activism (Aldred, 2010; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Green et al., 2012). That is, the activity of cycling is commonly associated with more favourable environmental meanings than are its adherents, the cyclists. This suggestion warrants further research.

Environmentalism is commonly assumed to be a motivator for cycling but empirical investigations do not consistently endorse this claim. Some cyclists report being motivated by environmental concerns (Aldred, 2010; Green et al., 2012; M. Jensen, 1999; Steinbach et al., 2011), some have environmental values but cycle primarily for other reasons (Aldred, 2013b; Green et al., 2012; McCarthy, 2011), and some cyclists dislike being associated with environmentalism (Daley & Rissel, 2011; Pooley et al., 2013). The consensus leans slightly towards environmental concerns not being a strong motivator for the uptake of cycling and

for cycling through choice being motivated more by leisure and health ideals (Kingham et al., 2011; Pooley et al., 2013).

3.2.3 Breaking the rules

Cyclists have a reputation for ignoring, breaking, or not knowing the rules of the road (Albert de la Bruheze, 2000; Aldred, 2013b; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Rissel et al., 2010; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). Cyclists have been described as ignoring red lights, riding on footpaths or pavements, and riding against the flow of traffic (Aldred, 2013b; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). Breaking road rules is usually framed negatively, but cycle couriers have incorporated rule-breaking in deliberate strategies to enact positively framed maverick identities (Aldred, 2013b; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; Rissel et al., 2010).

Cyclists who break rules are commonly othered, particularly by people who do not cycle. Their rule breaking appears to single them out as deviant; this comes despite widespread admissions that many drivers also routinely break road rules (Aldred, 2013a; Basford et al., 2002; Fincham, 2007; Fishman, Washington, & Haworth, 2012). Basford et al. (2002) note that although drivers' rule breaking behaviours are described as justified because of contextual factors, cyclists' rule breaking behaviours are more often judged to be a result of the disposition of cyclists themselves (see also Musselwhite et al., 2012). These differences in perception are clearly linked to notions of attribution bias (see section 2.3.3).

Cyclists are also stereotyped as rule breakers. That is, individual cyclists are expected to break road rules because of generalizing beliefs that all cyclists are rule breakers (Daley &

Rissel, 2011). Some cyclists argue that drivers judge them "unfairly" as a result of this stereotyping (Daley & Rissel, 2011, p. 211). Rule breaking is associated with cyclists in general, and also with some subgroups of cyclists. Those who wear Lycra (Aldred, 2013b; Rissel et al., 2010), and transport cyclists and bicycle couriers (Daley & Rissel, 2011), are particularly associated with illegal behaviours. Cyclists may be more negatively stereotyped than drivers (despite potentially similar behaviours) because fewer people cycle and many drivers consider cyclists to be in their out-groups.

3.2.4 Risk and vulnerability

Although cycling is usually considered to be a choice, it is also routinely described as risky (see for example Rimano et al., 2015; Rissel et al., 2010). The Ministry of Transport reports that cyclists in New Zealand are ten times more likely, per distance travelled, to be injured or killed in a collision than someone driving a car (Ministry of Transport, 2009). The value of such statistics is dubious (Koorey, 2007), but similar figures are commonly used in support of the idea that cycling is risky and cyclists are vulnerable (de Hartog, Boogaard, Nijland, & Hoek, 2010; Dekoster & Schollaert, 1999). There is considerable agreement that a discourse of risk deters people from cycling (Aldred, 2013b; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Heinen et al., 2010; Horton, 2007; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Joshi, Senior, & Smith, 2001; Kingham et al., 2011; Pooley et al., 2013).

In the context of social meanings, some of the most interesting features of risk discourses are those that rely on perceptions, image, and stereotypes. First, perceptions can be more important than objective measures in influencing cycling practices (Kingham et al., 2011; McGinn et al., 2007; Parkin, Wardman, & Page, 2007). Perceptions of risk have been strongly influenced by the framing of cyclists as vulnerable, particularly by media, government, and cycling advocates (Horton, 2007; Koorey, 2007; Rimano et al., 2015). This

may mean that social meanings that overemphasise risk may deter, from cycling, people who might find the *actual* risk acceptable.

Second, there is evidence to suggest that stereotypes render cyclists vulnerable through the way they influence driver behaviour. Stereotypes of cyclists often focus on negative behaviours, low status, and othering; these can lead other road users to become inconsiderate and hostile towards cyclists (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Fincham, 2007; Fishman et al., 2012; Hiscock et al., 2002; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Kingham et al., 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Rimano et al., 2015; Rissel et al., 2010; Steinbach et al., 2011). Drivers have "readily admitted" to treating cyclists aggressively (Basford et al., 2002, p. 4), and cyclists report being "fearful that, because drivers see them as outsiders, they can be justifiably vindictive towards them" (McCarthy, 2011, p. 1445). Here, the risk itself results from social meanings, at least in part.

Third, a cyclist's appearance can have implications for how they are perceived and thus how they are treated (Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011, p. 214; Fishman et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2014; Walker, 2007). For cyclists, their clothing is often more visible than their vehicle, and clothing has become an important carrier of social meanings associated with cycling (Goodman et al., 2014; Stokes & Hallett, 1992). Some cyclists resist wearing clothes that identify them as cyclists, fearing association with negatively stereotyped groups like bicycle couriers; others feel that wearing clothing that identifies them as "proper" cyclists, or legitimate road users, makes them safer on the roads (Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011). Relatedly, there is considerable pressure on cyclists in many countries to wear hi-visibility clothing (and sometimes helmets); pressure to dress appropriately contributes to a perception that cyclists are responsible for their own safety (Aldred, 2013a, 2013b; Daley &

Rissel, 2011; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; O'Callaghan, 2013; Sellwood, 2014). Social meanings associated with clothing reinforce the idea that cycling is risky, and implicate cyclists in negotiating their safety through their clothing choices (cf. Goodman et al., 2014; Rimano et al., 2015).

Together, assertions that perceptions of risk are more important than actual risk, and evidence that stereotypes and cyclist appearance contribute to the way that cyclists are treated on the roads, demonstrate the strong connection between social meanings and the risk associated with cycling.

3.2.5 Section summary

In this section, I have described some of the social meanings that literature commonly associates with cycling. First, cycling is, in many contexts, described as not normal and stigmatised. That said, cycling is more normal amongst some groups than others; younger people, males, and ethnic majorities are most commonly associated with cycling. Second, I highlighted that although cycling is sometimes associated with economic necessity, in developed cities it is more often described as a choice. Choosing to cycle is associated with health, leisure, and environmental concerns. Third, I explained that cyclists have a reputation for rule breaking behaviour and that they are othered and are stereotyped as deviant. Finally, I outlined some of the social meanings associated with cycling risk. I commented that perceptions of risk may be more important influences on cycling practices than objective assessments of risk, that stereotypes may render cyclists vulnerable through influencing driver behaviour, and that a cyclist's appearance can have important implications for how they are treated by other road users.

3.3 Motorcycling

Compared to other modes of transport, there is relatively little academic literature concerning motorcycling (Pinch & Reimer, 2012).[13] However, in contrast to some of the other modes, the literature that exists has a strong focus on social meanings. The three most commonly noted social meanings in motorcycling literature relate to gender (and particularly masculinity); motorcycling's history of association with rebellion and outlaws; and risk. Below, I explore these themes in more detail.

Before doing so, it is worth noting that motorcycling is consistently associated with leisure in both historical and contemporary literature. A focus on motorcycling as leisure persists despite motorcycling clearly being both a leisure and utility activity (Austin et al., 2010; Hopper & Moore, 1983; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). This focus appears to have led to the development of a literature that, in contrast to other modes of transport, is more focused on consumption, marketing, and the sociology of groups and subcultures, and less focused on infrastructures, rational choice, transport mode choice, and instrumental concerns. I recognise this historical trajectory, while noting that leisure and utility transport can never be considered entirely separate (Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Spinney, 2011).

3.3.1 Gender

Motorcycling is commonly represented as a highly gendered practice; particularly, it has been associated with macho heterosexual masculinity (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Dittmar, 1992; Jderu, 2015; Meaton & Kingham, 1998; Natalier, 2001; Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Notably, there is a considerable body of literature about motorcycle subcultures, clubs,

[13] *Motorcycling* incorporates the use of all Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs), including mopeds and scooters.

gangs, rebellion, and outlaws that focuses overwhelmingly on male motorcyclists (Hebdige, 1988; Hopper & Moore, 1983; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

Despite recent moves to investigate the role of women in motorcycling cultures, the dominance of men and of male accounts of motorcycling remain striking (Martin, Schouten, & McAlexander, 2006; Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Discussions of women in motorcycling often acknowledge that women's roles in biker cultures exist in a context of the "inherent hegemonic hyper-masculinity of the outlaw mythos" (Martin et al., 2006, p. 178; see also Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Natalier (2001) provides one of the few (and by her own admission, partial) accounts that exist of female motorcyclists. She tentatively suggests that female motorcyclists may approach risk in ways that would be traditionally associated with masculinity, but has insufficient data to pursue this, or other masculine and feminine characteristics, in detail.

Although most motorcycles are strongly associated with masculinity, scooters have a more feminine image (Hebdige, 1988). Mirroring discussions of women's competence and the evolution of gendered car choices, scooters are described as the smaller, simpler, cleaner, and more feminine alternatives to traditional motorcycles (Berger, 1986; Hebdige, 1988). Scooters are also associated with an *aestheticisation* of motorcycling; this change received a positive reception from young men working in fields associated with design, but scooters have been more generally derided as "unmanly", "superficial", and "effeminate" (Hebdige, 1988, pp. 104-107).

The personal appearances of motorcyclists both reflect and reproduce gendered social meanings. Clothing and tattoos associated with traditional motorcycles, even those worn by women, often portray strong connections to machismo and masculinity (Schouten &

McAlexander, 1995). In contrast, those not adhering to these norms of dress may be accused of "somewhat campy interpretations of the stereotypical biker image, adding a designer flair to their expensive 'dress-up' leathers" (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p. 54).

Social meanings around gender, which are sometimes manifested through personal appearance, are some of the strongest and most prevalent meanings associated with motorcycling in literature.

3.3.2 Outlaws, rebellion, and escape

Motorcycling has a history of association with outlaws and rebellion. This history stretches back to the 1940s, and is characterised in a plethora of popular films and television shows (Austin et al., 2010; Harris, 1985; Hopper & Moore, 1983; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Wolf, 1991). Literature most commonly describes the development of the outlaw image stemming from an American context, in which early outlaws were associated with poor, white slums, and returned World War 2 veterans who did not reintegrate smoothly into domestic family life and expectations (Austin et al., 2010; Harris, 1985).

Although motorcyclists have been described as outlaws, the extent of the lawlessness with which they are associated varies considerably. Disregard for the law can extend from wearing a helmet that does not meet legal standards, to drugs and weapons trading (Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Hopper & Moore, 1983; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Shand, 2011). Although this variety is apparent in detailed motorcycling literature, it is sometimes glossed over in favour of a simplified and apparently homogenous image of resistance to dominant legal and cultural norms (see for example Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008,

p. 36). Similarly, law-abiding motorcyclists are sometimes excluded from popular representations of motorcycling (Harris, 1985; Pinch & Reimer, 2012).

The homogeneity of simplistic outlaw images may be connected to early associations between motorcycling and sociological and anthropological concepts of *subcultures* (Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Subcultures were conceived to be groups defined by opposition to the dominant culture; groups such as punks and hippies were given as examples, and such groups were frequently constructed as deviant (Bennett, 1999, 2005; Clarke et al., 2003; Cloudsley, 2007; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Muggleton, 2007; Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Motorcycles were associated with subcultures through their use by mods, rockers, punks, and relatively exclusive groups like Harley-Davidson clubs (Hebdige, 1979/2003; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Subcultures work has been criticised for its homogenisation of diverse and changing cultures but the concept remains popular (Bennett, 1999; Cloudsley, 2007; Marcelin, 2006). Similarly, the notion of outlaw bikers, although clearly homogenising, is very persistent (Austin et al., 2010; Harris, 1985; Pinch & Reimer, 2012).

One of the key features of the outlaw narrative is a notion of rebellion. Motorcycling and rebellion have been connected in social meanings in New Zealand since at least the 1950s (Watson, 1996). The international prevalence of similar meanings is widely attributed to their promotion by Anglo-American media, and particularly to the portrayal of rebellious motorcyclists in a number of popular feature films (Austin et al., 2010; Harris, 1985; Pinch & Reimer, 2012). Originally, the rebellion associated with motorcycling was portrayed as a threat to ordinary society; it involved lawlessness, degeneracy, and deliberate self-exile from the mainstream (Austin et al., 2010; Harris, 1985; Pinch & Reimer, 2012). The kind of

rebellion with which motorcycling is associated has, however, softened over time: "the unambiguous danger of the motorcycle gang member, as expressed by 1950s and 1960s films, was replaced with an uninhibited, peace-seeking, free-spirited rebellion that many members of the baby boom generation found attractive" (Austin et al., 2010, p. 952).

Earlier images of outlaws and violent rebellion seem to have evolved into notions of temporary escape. These particularly concern escape from repetitive and routine work, and from mainstream, middle-class behavioural norms and conventions (Austin et al., 2010; Mark & Pearson, 2001; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Wolf, 1991). Schouten and McAlexander (1995, p. 52) describe Harley-Davidson motorcycles in particular as "the antithesis of all the sources of confinement (including cars, offices, schedules, authority, and relationships) that may characterize [the riders'] various working and family situations".[14]

Contemporary literature is quick to emphasise that images of free-spirited rebellion and escape remain a considerable draw to motorcycling (Austin et al., 2010; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Mark & Pearson, 2001; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). The popularity of these images is due, at least in part, to the deliberate promotional efforts of the motorcycle industry (Austin et al., 2010; Mark & Pearson, 2001). Images of rebellion and escape are not described as the only motivations for the uptake of motorcycling, nor as appealing to all motorcyclists, but images of rebellion (in its various forms) remain some of the most dominant social meanings connected with motorcycling (Austin et al., 2010; Hopper & Moore, 1983; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Watson, 1996).

As understandings of rebellion have changed, so the meanings associated with motorcycle clothing have evolved alongside. Leather jackets, for example, have moved from

[14] A similar notion of escape has been noted with regard to jogging (Cook et al., 2015).

being considered a symbol of the outlaw and rebel, evolving to an association with freedom and escape, and on to becoming a popular, mainstream fashion item (Austin et al., 2010; Milwaukee Harley-Davidson, 2004; Murphy & Patterson, 2011).

3.3.3 Risk

The physical risks associated with motorcycling are frequently mentioned in the literature reviewed. Much historic literature either takes an element of risk for granted (and focuses on other cultural aspects of motorcycling) or offers primarily quantitative analyses of injury rates and features of crashes (Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Natalier, 2001). Over about the last fifteen years, however, there has been an increase in the prevalence of research considering cultural aspects of the risks associated with motorcycling.

As with cycling risk, motorcycling risk is connected to social meanings. Intriguingly, literature identifies that those who do and those who do not motorcycle have different perceptions of the risk of motorcycling (Crundall, Bibby, Clarke, Ward, & Bartle, 2008; Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001). Motorcyclists are described as seeing risk as something that can be controlled through highly skilled riding practices, while non-motorcyclists describe the risk of motorcycling as primarily being a result of irresponsible and thrill-seeking riding (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Crundall et al., 2008; Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001). Although there is some acknowledgement in literature that motorcyclists do not all share a single homogenous approach to risk (Jderu, 2015; Musselwhite et al., 2012), a distinction between the risk perceptions of motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists is clearly presented. This distinction could have a number of important implications for motorcycling practices.

First, different perceptions of risk may influence who motorcycles. If there is a widespread perception that motorcycling is a risky activity for thrill-seekers, then individuals who are attracted to those features (or not deterred by them) will be most likely to try motorcycling (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Crundall et al., 2008; Musselwhite et al., 2012). Supporting this idea, people who take the most risks when driving are most likely to report thinking they would like motorcycling (Crundall et al., 2008). It seems likely that a recursive relationship exists between widespread perceptions that motorcycling is associated with risk-taking individuals and with risk-taking individuals deciding to motorcycle. Although there is some contention around whether risk is appealing to motorcyclists or not (cf Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Musselwhite et al., 2012; Pinch & Reimer, 2012) an acceptance of risk and thrill-seeking may contribute to an initial decision to motorcycle. In addition, for existing motorcyclists, an emphasis on the ability to control risk through safe riding practices means motorcycling can be understood as an activity that is not inherently dangerous (Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001). This may help motorcyclists to accept and justify their motorcycling, and continue motorcycling in the face of widespread safety concerns (Natalier, 2001).

Second, perceptions of risk may have implications for how motorcycling is performed. Considering risk as something that can be controlled through skill may mean that, unlike drivers and cyclists, motorcyclists rarely externalise blame for accidents. Drivers describe being "forced" to take risks as a result of being late or stressed (Musselwhite et al., 2012, p. 109), and cyclists report fear of "vindictive" drivers (McCarthy, 2011, p. 1445). In contrast, motorcyclists may more often construct accidents as their own skill failures; this might lead to a higher commitment to skill development (Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001).

Although perceptions that motorcycling is associated with thrill-seeking have largely been attributed to non-motorcyclists, some motorcyclists do engage in thrill-seeking behaviour (Ghurbal, 2008; Haigh, 2008; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). The concept of *edgework* is useful here. Edgework concerns the ability to maintain control on the edge of chaos, and has been associated with participation in extreme sports, such as skydiving, hang gliding, and snowboarding (Ghurbal, 2008; Haigh, 2008; Jderu, 2015; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Motorcyclists engage in edgework by pushing themselves and their machines to the limits of performance (Ghurbal, 2008; Haigh, 2008; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Edgework is associated both with risk and with notions of free-spirited rebellion, adventure, and an—albeit perhaps temporary—rejection of norms and behavioural conventions (Ghurbal, 2008; Jderu, 2015; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). As Ghurbal (2008, p. 11) reports, "in a bid to escape the fetters put on them by the constraints of everyday life, and in a soul-searching quest for meaningful personal identity, people increasingly embark upon dangerous, high-risk adventure activities". Similar connections could be made to the exhilaration, sense of being hyper-alert, and maverick status that are sometimes valued by bicycle couriers (Fincham, 2007; Spinney, 2007). As with the skill that motorcyclists rely on, edgework is often described as an intensely embodied experience (Jderu, 2015; Natalier, 2001), thus highlighting the intricate linkages that can exist between social meanings and lived experiences of transport.

Although some motorcyclists and others do recognise structural elements related to motorcycling risk, most understandings of motorcycling risk focus heavily on motorcyclist agency and behaviours (Natalier, 2001). Structural elements of motorcycling risk include the role of a dominant car culture, and infrastructural features such as road markings that are hazardous for motorcyclists (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001). Agentic elements include

motorcyclist skill and riding practices that include edgework and thrill seeking. Most of the understandings of risk discussed above place a heavy emphasis on agency. Perceptions of risk as agentic have implications for the kinds of policies and strategies that might be considered appropriate for reducing the risks associated with motorcycling. In particular, externally imposed rules and recommendations may be rejected by motorcyclists who prefer to rely on accumulated, and often embodied, skill to keep themselves safe (Natalier, 2001).

3.3.4 Section summary

In summary, social meanings depict a highly masculine culture of traditional motorcycling, with scooters associated more with women and with male effeminacy. Motorcyclists are sometimes also associated with images of outlaws and rebellion. The kinds of rebellion with which motorcycling is associated have evolved from being perceived as a serious threat to mainstream society, to a less aggressive and less deviant desire to temporarily escape the routines and strictures of everyday life. Motorcycling is also associated with risk, and that risk is commonly perceived differently by motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists. Motorcyclists often argue that risk can be controlled through high levels of motorcycling skill. In contrast, non-motorcyclists commonly regard the risks of motorcycling as resulting from thrill-seeking riding practices. The view of non-motorcyclists is similar to descriptions of motorcycling as edgework, which suggest that risk and exhilaration may be part of the appeal of motorcycling.

3.4 Bus Use

This section discusses the social meanings associated, in literature, with bus use. I will demonstrate that bus use is primarily associated with users with low economic, professional, and social status, although positive social meanings include associations with energy conservation and with community identity.

3.4.1 Low status

There is considerable consensus in academic literature that buses are a low status mode of transport (Beirão & Sarsfield Cabral, 2007; Ellaway et al., 2003; Goodman et al., 2013; Green, Jones, & Roberts, 2014; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010; Sadalla & Krull, 1995; Stokes & Hallett, 1992). Although bus use appears to be entirely normal in some cities—such as London (Steinbach et al., 2011)—the association between buses and low status appears to be very widely recognised. As with driving, status is primarily, but not exclusively, concerned with wealth and profession. Bus users are described as being among the more economically and socially disempowered members of society (Angrosino, 1994; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Guiver, 2007; Hiscock et al., 2002; Jain, 2011; Pooley et al., 2013; Sadalla & Krull, 1995; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Cohorts of bus users are described as including disproportionately large numbers of older people, single mothers, recent immigrants, ethnic minorities, domestic service workers, people on low incomes, and disabled people (Angrosino, 1994; Green et al., 2014; Knowles, 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2000). Some authors do acknowledge that wealthy members of the working population use buses, and that bus use can help to minimise exclusion (Angrosino, 1994; Green et al., 2014). However, the absence from buses of higher status social groups is often starkly emphasised:

> No manager and no male professional used the bus. (Root et al., 1996, p. 25)

> In many big cities, going to work by bus is a perfectly appropriate thing for even the most affluent of business people to do. But in our city, the bus is the very embodiment of stigma. (Angrosino, 1994, p. 21)

Further, bus use is strongly gendered, with women using buses more than men (Pooley et al., 2013; Pooley et al., 2006; Root et al., 1996). This imbalance has existed since

the early days of competition between public and private motorised modes of travel (Pooley et al., 2013; Pooley et al., 2006). The gender difference probably links both to women's historically lower status than men (in terms of profession, disposable income, and perceived capability) as well as to men's greater concern for status (discussed in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.5). In addition, men who take the bus may be considered less masculine and less sexually attractive than men who drive; similarly negative meanings do not appear to adhere to women's bus use, a difference that may contribute to gender differences in using buses (Sadalla & Krull, 1995).

The association between buses and low status leads to buses often being regarded as stigmatized, and as a mode of transport of last resort (Angrosino, 1994; Green et al., 2014; A. Jones et al., 2012; Root et al., 1996; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). In the Christchurch context, buses are sometimes referred to as loser cruisers, implying that only a "loser" would catch a bus (Meadows, 2012; Moore, 2010). Relatedly, there is also a common, and long standing, perception that bus use results in proximity to objectionable people and in undesirable and intrusive social contact (Bissell, 2010; Daumier, 1839; Hiscock et al., 2002; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Pooley et al., 2006; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b).

We can trace the development of bus stigma to a number of changes in transport use and policy over time. For example, in England the development of suburban train infrastructure (and associated housing developments) led to a dominance of suburban train commuting by wealthier people, while poorer urban populations continued to use buses (Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). In addition, in the USA and New Zealand, as car use grew, government agencies prioritised buses that served those residential areas with low rates of car ownership (Angrosino, 1994; Imran & Matthews, 2011; Watson, 1996). These spatial and

social developments likely contributed to a widespread association between buses and lower socio-economic groups, and to a perception that bus services were a social service, benefit, or safety net (Root et al., 1996; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b).

Credit for promoting the stigmatisation of buses must also go to the alleged quote of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: "A man who, beyond the age of 26, finds himself on a bus can count himself as a failure" (Hansard, 2003). There is little evidence that Margaret Thatcher ever spoke these words (McKie, 2005), but she is famous for ostensibly having done so (Hansard, 2003; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Indeed, the frequency with which this quote has been repeated to me in response to this research indicates that it constitutes a widely shared, if not necessarily entirely accurate, social meaning. It seems then, that as cars became symbols of personal accomplishment and economic mobility, so buses became their antithesis, associated with the economically and socially disempowered.

3.4.2 Choosing bus use

Despite the very large number of references to buses as low status and a last resort, some individuals choose to use buses. Few authors explicitly connect the choice to use buses with social meanings but some do describe meanings that could attract bus use. For example, Sadalla and Krull (1995) observe that women (although not men) are associated with environmentally friendly behaviours when they take the bus. Being associated with environmentally friendly behaviours could motivate bus use, but Sadalla and Krull did not investigate that possibility. Similarly, Murtagh et al. (2012a) report that taking public transport is sometimes associated with a community identity, and they did demonstrate some influence of transport identities on mode choices. Bus use can also be associated with ongoing quality of life (and not just necessity) in older age (Andrews, Parkhurst, Susilo, & Shaw, 2012; Green et al., 2014; Musselwhite & Haddad, 2010). In addition, and in contrast to

associations of bus use with undesirable social contact, some authors note that the sociability of buses can be appealing (Hiscock et al., 2002; Mann & Abraham, 2006). Further, bus use can be a symbol of luxury and empowerment for those who have been too poor to access buses (Angrosino, 1994; Bostock, 2001). Finally, in some places—such as London—bus use may be a seemingly natural and unremarkable part of a socially ingrained habitus (Steinbach et al., 2011). Despite these examples of buses being associated with positive social meanings, most literature focuses more extensively on the low status of bus use.

3.4.3 Section summary

Literature, then, describes the social meanings associated with bus use in almost entirely negative terms, focusing on bus use as stigmatised and associated with individuals of low economic, professional, and social status. There is some acknowledgement of positive social meanings associated with bus use, particularly energy conserving behaviour and community identity, but these are largely overshadowed by meanings that suggest bus use is a last resort.

3.5 Walking

In this section, I consider the social meanings associated with walking. I will demonstrate that despite claims that walking is so normal and unremarkable as to be almost invisible in modern society, there are numerous social meanings associated with walking. Particularly, I will discuss three different kinds of walking, and highlight some of the social meanings with which they are sometimes associated.

3.5.1 Taken-for-granted

Middleton (2010, p. 576) complains that much research "assumes walking to be a homogenous and largely self-evident means of getting from one place to another" (see also Hubert, 2015). Approaches that take walking for granted fail to recognise massive diversity

in walking mechanics, walking experiences, and in the social and cultural significances of walking (Green, 2009; Middleton, 2010). A lack of acknowledgement of its diversity appears to have led to walking becoming "socially and culturally almost invisible" (Pooley et al., 2013, p. 113). This invisibility of walking may be compounded by research focusing only on the main mode of transport used for journeys as this overlooks the important role of walking as a link between other modes of transport (Pharoah, 2003; Sauter, 2014; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b).

Researchers who have undertaken serious investigations of walking have found it to be a diverse and complex social and cultural activity (Bourdieu, 1977; Golson & Dabbs, 1974; Green, 2009; Ingold, 2004; Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Urry, 2000). Swaggering, for example, is likely to be connected to very different social meanings to mincing, strolling, striding, or skulking (Bourdieu, 1977; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Even the biomechanics of walking have been found to be socially and culturally embedded and can differ according to a person's gender, national origin, occupation, and social group, as well as the context in which the walking takes place (for example natural or built environments, period in history, and whether walking alone or with others) (Bourdieu, 1977; Golson & Dabbs, 1974; Green, 2009; Ingold, 2004; Lee & Ingold, 2006; Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Urry, 2000).

There is little consensus, and even less systematic research, concerning different walking styles, the similarities and differences between walking in different contexts, and the social meanings associated with different kinds of walking. There is, however, increasing academic consensus that different ways of walking are significant in terms of their social meanings (Adey, 2010; Green, 2009; Lee & Ingold, 2006). In the following three sections, I

highlight some of the social meanings associated, in the literature reviewed, with walking as a biomechanical ability, with walking for transport, and with walking for leisure.

3.5.2 Walking as a biomechanical ability

Walking is often considered to be a normal and, in many ways, unremarkable biomechanical ability (Green, 2009; Pooley et al., 2013). Most people can walk and, as a result, we live in a pervasive ambulist culture (Oliver, 1993) in which walking is considered "fundamental to the everyday practice of social life" (Lee & Ingold, 2006, p. 67). Although most people can walk, some cannot. Being able to walk may be associated with power, success, and strength, while not being able to walk is sometimes connected to powerlessness, sexual incompetence, and a need for cures, treatments, and rehabilitation (Oliver, 1993). The ability to walk, then, has a social and cultural significance beyond the ability to move between two locations.

3.5.3 Walking as transport

Walking was very commonly used for transport in most places until at least the early twentieth century (Norton, 2007; Pooley et al., 2013). With the development of gears and engines, and particularly the advent of automobility, increasing numbers of people chose other methods of locomotion for transport purposes (Freund & Martin, 2004; Green, 2009; Norton, 2007; Pooley et al., 2013; Sauter, 2014; Watson, 1996). It is now very widely accepted that walking for transport has become the province of the poor and socially excluded (Bostock, 2001; Golson & Dabbs, 1974; Green, 2009; Guell et al., 2012; Ingold, 2004; Pooley et al., 2013; Pooley et al., 2006; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Watson, 1996).

In some places, walking still is a very commonly used mode of transport, but this is rarely considered to be the case in developed cities (Pooley, 2009). Where walking is less commonly used for transport, women are usually described as walking for transport more

than men, and children as walking for transport more than adults (Golson & Dabbs, 1974; Pooley et al., 2013). In addition, several authors have noted social meanings connecting good parenting and walking, which may lead to different walking norms for school escort journeys than for other kinds of utility travel (cf. Bean et al., 2008; Murtagh et al., 2012a; Schwanen, 2011; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Tranter & Sharpe, 2012).

3.5.4 Walking as leisure

Although walking used to be very commonly used for transport, in rich countries it has increasingly become associated with leisure. Academic literature describes walking in some countries and amongst some groups, as now being primarily a leisure activity (Dickinson et al., 2009; Green, 2009; Pooley, 2009; Pooley et al., 2013). Leisure walking is sometimes even described as one of Europe's most popular sports and leisure pursuits (Green, 2009; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Leisure walking comes in many varieties—dog walking, long distance hiking, Nordic walking, mall walking and more—and different formulations of leisure walking are associated with different social meanings. As a general rule, leisure walking is linked with wealthy individuals; this may be partly due to different responses by different socio-economic groups to public promotions in wealthy countries that urge increases in physical activity and environmental responsibility (Bostock, 2001; Green, 2009; Guell et al., 2012; Pooley et al., 2013; Urry, 2000).

Social meanings associated with leisure walking are generally quite different from those associated with walking for transport (Green, 2009; Pooley et al., 2013; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). For example, where transport walking may be associated with socio-economic disadvantage, leisure walking may be constructed as an antidote to modern life or a route to spiritual refreshment (Brown, 2012; Green, 2009; Green et al., 2014; Ingold, 2004; Urry, 2000). Similarly, long distance tramping or hiking may be viewed as a quest or

challenge, involving a degree of hardship and engendering a sense of achievement (Green, 2009; Urry, 2000). Long distance walking also connects with forms of national identity, dominance over territory and, in the New Zealand context, a conquering project of settler capitalism (Green, 2009; Urry, 2000).

3.5.5 Section summary

In this section, I have highlighted some of the social meanings associated with walking. I explained that walking is often taken for granted as homogenous and normal and, as a result, sometimes appears socially and culturally invisible. Researchers who have investigated walking in detail have, however, found considerable diversity, even in the biomechanics of the styles of walking associated with different social groups. I briefly explored the social meanings associated with walking as a biomechanical ability, with walking for transport, and with walking for leisure. In particular, I noted that an inability to walk is associated with a lack of power and a need for medical intervention. I also noted that walking for transport is described as rare amongst wealthy populations and is more commonly associated with poverty and exclusion. In contrast, walking for leisure has become increasingly widespread, and different kinds of leisure walking are associated with different meanings, including spiritual refreshment, challenge, and national identity.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the social meanings that literature connects to different kinds of everyday travel. In doing so, I have provided a background to my own investigation of social meanings across the different modes of transport commonly used in Christchurch.

Social meanings associated with driving have a focus on status and gender, and a driving norm encourages car use and discourages the use of other modes of transport.

Accordingly, cycling is often seen as abnormal and cyclists are sometimes described as deviant, mad, or eccentric. Cycling is associated with leisure, health, and environmental concerns and also with rule breaking and risk. Motorcycling is also associated with risk, with sub-themes of skill, thrill-seeking, and edgework. Motorcycling is also associated with a highly masculine culture and with images of outlaws, rebellion, and escape. The literature reviewed describes bus use in primarily negative terms, focusing on stigma and low social, professional, and economic status. Although walking is also associated with poverty and exclusion, it is commonly taken for granted as something that everyone does. Despite being commonly taken for granted, walking is a complex physical, social, and cultural activity that is associated with a range of different meanings and is connected to both transport and leisure, as well as to issues around ability and disability. Over all the different modes of transport reviewed here, literature suggests that some of the key themes in terms of social meanings are norms, wealth and poverty, choice and necessity, gender, and risk. Each of these themes resurfaces in later discussions of the results of my empirical work.

As noted at the start of this chapter, there is a lack of diversity in the contextual origins of the literature reviewed. Throughout the remainder of the thesis, I draw comparisons to this literature, but acknowledge that the background information that it provides is historically, culturally, and geographically patchy. Research in more diverse contexts would considerably facilitate improved understandings of how social meanings influence transport practices.

Chapter 4: Methods

As noted, this research focuses on transport practices in Christchurch, New Zealand. Christchurch is a predominantly flat city, with a temperate and relatively dry climate.[15] It is New Zealand's third largest city, the largest in the South Island, and the capital of the Canterbury province. Christchurch has a population of just over 340,000 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Figure 1 shows Christchurch along with Auckland (New Zealand's largest city) and Wellington (the capital).

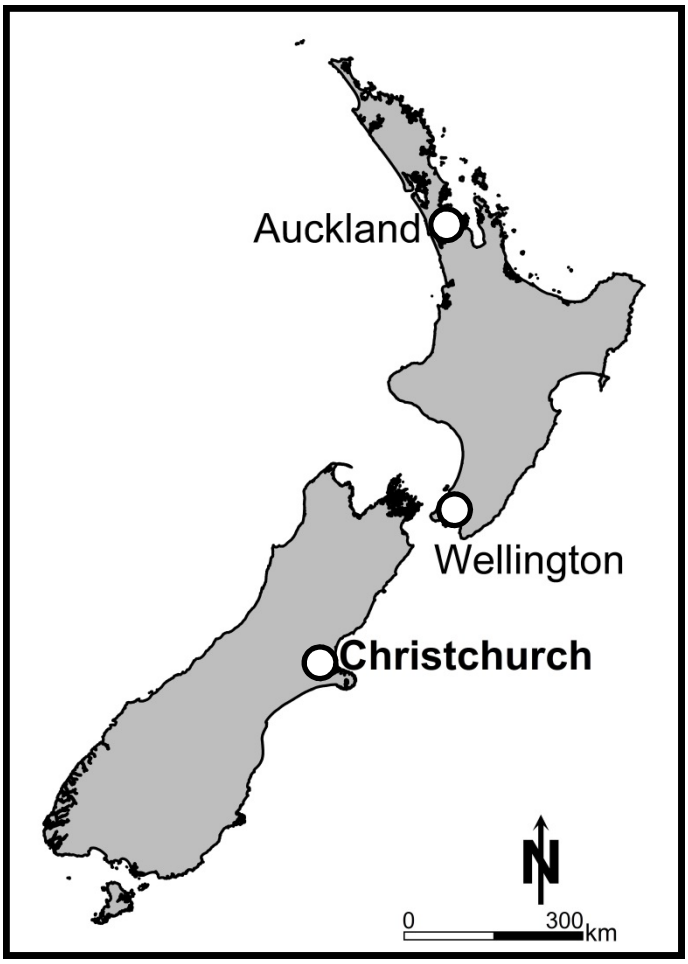

Figure 1: Christchurch in the context of New Zealand

[15] Christchurch has an average of 280 dry (<1mm rain) days a year and a mean annual rainfall of 618mm (Christchurch City Council, n.d.; National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, 2011).

A series of major earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 has had considerable repercussions for travel patterns and infrastructure in Christchurch (Christchurch City Council, 2012; Giovinazzi et al., 2011; Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy Partners, 2012). A major recovery and reconstruction programme is underway and is resulting in ongoing changes to urban transport infrastructures, to the priority accorded to different modes of transport on different streets, to speed limits, and to network planning (CERA, 2013; Christchurch City Council, 2012). The changes here come partly in response to wishes expressed by Christchurch residents to have a city that is less dominated by cars, has more effective public transport, and that caters better to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians (Christchurch City Council, 2011, 2012). Ongoing transport network changes in Christchurch mean that generating an improved understanding of transport practices is timely.

This research is a multi-modal study of transport and social meanings in Christchurch. The transport modes on which it focuses were determined by the practices of 25 research participants. I give detailed attention to every mode of urban transport used regularly by more than one participant.[16] The transport modes covered are driving, cycling, motorcycling, bus use, and walking.

The research addresses three core goals, these are:

1. To explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch.
2. To investigate the influences these social meanings have on transport practices.
3. To identify some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices.

[16] One participant used a non-motorised push scooter to accompany her (also scootering) children to school. I have not included detailed content on scootering.

The data needed to address these goals were collected through a combination of three different research methods: focus groups, participant diaries, and individual interviews. Focus group data were primarily used to address the first research goal, and diary and interview data were used to address the second research goal. The third goal was addressed by bringing the research findings together with existing literature. Data collection methods were pilot tested with the help of staff and postgraduate students in the Department of Geography at the University of Canterbury. The methods were then approved for use with research participants by the University's Human Ethics Committee (approval number HEC 2013/78). Copies of the information sheet and consent form used with research participants are included in Appendix A.

A cohort of 32 research participants took part in data collection exercises. Each research participant was asked to participate in a focus group, then to keep a diary, then to attend an individual interview. Before participating in the research, each participant was asked to choose a name by which to be known in the published outputs of the study; most of the participant names used in this thesis are names chosen by participants. I chose names for four participants who did not choose for themselves. Two participants chose to be referred to as "Stephen" (and did not wish to change to avoid confusion) so each supplied a differentiating surname initial.

The next section in this chapter explains how research participants were recruited and describes the resulting participant cohort. The following three sections each detail one of the three methods used in this study (focus groups, diaries, and interviews). I conclude the chapter with a review of the use of talk-based methods and with a description of the analysis methods used.

4.1 Participant Recruitment

I recruited participants through Toastmasters clubs. Toastmasters is an international organisation through which members (called *Toastmasters*) learn public speaking and leadership skills. The organisation is represented by local clubs and there are over 30 Toastmasters clubs in Christchurch. Participants were recruited through Toastmasters clubs for three reasons: for ease of recruitment, for Toastmasters' likely willingness to complete the research exercises, and for the range of potential participants available to be recruited. In the following paragraphs I describe these reasons in more detail.

I anticipated that it would be easier to recruit participants through Toastmasters clubs than through other channels. I had easy access to club meetings through being a long-standing member of Toastmasters and a committee member in the local Toastmasters' administration. The focus on public speaking at Toastmasters clubs meant that the delivery of a recruitment speech was a more appropriate recruitment method (and one more likely to attract members' attention) than, for example, delivery of flyers, e-mails to membership lists, or articles in a club magazine. At each of six Toastmasters clubs, I delivered a presentation explaining the research and asking for volunteers. Of the 93 people who saw the presentation, 30 volunteered to participate in the research; this is a response rate of 32%.[17] This response rate is high compared to those achieved by other studies on similar topics. For example, through cold calling at households, Murtagh et al. (2012a) achieved a response rate of about 10% despite their study requiring less commitment from participants. Two additional people who had not seen the presentation joined in with focus groups at participating clubs; a total of 32 people participated in the research.

[17] Toastmasters club meetings are open to prospective members. Prospective members were welcome to join the research but few did so. While exact guest numbers at meetings were not recorded, the response rate excluding guests was probably closer to 40%.

I anticipated that Toastmasters may be more willing than other people to complete the research exercises. The diary exercise required participants to make daily voice recordings for a week. I hypothesised that people who had joined Toastmasters to improve their public speaking skills may be less averse to voice recording than others might be.

Finally, I anticipated that using Toastmasters clubs would allow me to recruit a range of participants. I sought participants with different perspectives on, and experiences of, transport in Christchurch. Particularly, I sought people with varied demographic characteristics (such as gender, age, income, and occupation). The existence of multiple clubs with different demographic profiles allowed me to select clubs purposively to recruit a diverse participant cohort. For example, to fill an emerging gap in the participant cohort I visited one club known to have a high proportion of young adult members.

Alongside demographic diversity, I sought participants who were broadly representative of the general New Zealand population in terms of their use of different transport modes (for details see Ministry of Transport, 2015a). Informal observations suggested that Toastmasters met this criterion and constituted an appropriate sample frame. I crafted the recruitment speech to try to avoid the self-selection of people with a strong interest in transport. I focused on reasons for participating that were not related to transport; these included altruism, personal development,[18] and fun. This strategy appears to have been largely successful; although some of the participants had very strong opinions on transport issues, most did not.

[18] The diary exercise was designed, in part, to complement Toastmasters' exercises on impromptu speaking skills.

4.1.1 Profile of participant cohort

The participants who volunteered to take part were diverse in terms of demographic characteristics. They were not entirely representative of the local population but this should be expected with a small-scale, qualitative study. Table 1 shows some key demographic characteristics of the participant group compared to the population of Christchurch.

The initial cohort had a notable male bias (61% in the study compared to 48% in the population); however, the attrition rate of males was higher than that of females. Of the participants starting the research, 74% of males and 92% of females completed all exercises. This means that the initial focus groups had a male bias but the gender composition of the cohort for the diary and interview exercises more closely represented the general population (56% male compared to the 48% of males in the population). The reasons for the different participation and attrition rates are unknown.

The age profile of participants was more heavily weighted towards the 30 to 60 years age group than is the population of Christchurch. This is almost certainly a result of the average age profile of Toastmasters members. A 2013 Toastmasters Members Survey showed that 85% of Toastmasters International members were aged between 25 and 64 (Toastmasters International, 2013); 81% of research participants were aged between 25 and 64. Although the age profile of participants does not match the age profile of the population, I attempted to ensure a spread of participant ages.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants compared to population

Characteristic	Participants (%)	Christchurch City (%)[a]
Gender (n=31)		
Male	61	48
Female	39	52
Age (n=31)		
20-29	13	19
30-39	23	17
40-49	29	19
50-59	26	18
60-69	6	13
70 and over	3	14
Income (n=31)		
$0 to $15,000	19	24
$15,001 to $30,000	6	22
$30,001 to $50,000	23	21
$50,001 to $70,000	19	13
$70,000 and over	23	12
Not stated	10	8
Occupation of employed individuals (n=29)		
Managers	21	15
Professionals	38	22
Technicians and trade workers	17	13
Community and personal service workers	0	9
Clerical and administration workers	3	12
Sales workers	14	10
Machinery operators and workers	3	6
Labourers	0	10
Not elsewhere included[b]	3	4

Note. One participant did not complete the short demographics questionnaire on which the table is based and so is not included in these figures.

[a]Data for Christchurch are taken from the 2013 New Zealand Census of Populations and Dwellings (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) as at 28 May 2014. Age and gender figures include individuals aged 20 years and over. Individuals under 18 years of age are not eligible to join Toastmasters and no study participants were aged under 20. Income figures include all individuals aged 15 and over. Occupation figures include employed individuals aged 15 and over. [b]"Not elsewhere included" consists of people who did not list an occupation or of occupations "outside scope" of the census, or unidentifiable (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

Participants had a wide range of income levels and, with the exception of the $15,001 to $30,000 income bracket, all income levels were fairly evenly represented in this research. This profile does not match the general Christchurch population, which has fewer people earning over $50,000. As with age, this mismatch is probably due to the membership profile of Toastmasters clubs. Toastmasters International does have information on the average income of members (Toastmasters International, 2013), but dollar figures for an international organisation with members in 135 different countries (Toastmasters International, 2015) are unlikely to accurately indicate wealth comparative to the diverse populations in which members live. For this research, the income distribution is both a benefit (because it is diverse) and a limitation (because it does not accurately represent the local population). Future studies could seek further representation from lower income groups.

The occupation profile of participants was substantially different to that of the general population (particularly, it had more managers and professionals, and fewer community and personal service workers, clerical and administration workers, and labourers). This is a limitation of this research, but it could be addressed in future studies employing different sampling strategies.

There was some participant attrition between focus groups and the diary exercise; of the 32 focus group participants, 25 went on to keep diaries. Transport mode choices for trips taken during the diary period were recorded, so some transport mode choice details are available for 25 of the 32 participants. These details are shown in Table 2; the table also includes figures on transport mode share in New Zealand as a whole.

Table 2: Participant use of transport modes during diary week

Transport mode	Participants using this mode at least once (%, n=25)	Participant trip legs using this mode (%, n=783) [a]	Trip legs using this mode in New Zealand (%)[b]
Driver	88	68	53
Pedestrian	72	14	17
Car passenger	32	7	26
Cyclist	28	5	1.2
Public transport user	20	3	2.8
Motorcyclist	4	1	0.3

Note. There is a minor difference in definitions between this study and the New Zealand data. Figures for drivers and car passengers for this study include all instances of driving or passengering except those using scheduled public transport, this means they include trip legs in work vehicles, shuttle buses, and taxis. In contrast the New Zealand figures incorporate only trips in private vehicles. Also, New Zealand figures for public transport incorporate users of buses, trains, and ferries. The only public transport used by participants (and the only type widely available in Christchurch) is the bus.

[a]Exact trip leg figures for this study should be treated with caution as there are some inconsistencies in reporting between participants; where thought to be material these inconsistencies are noted in the main body of text.

[b]Figures for New Zealand are taken from the New Zealand Household Travel Survey (Ministry of Transport, 2015a).

Although most participants reported that their diary week was relatively typical, it did not always include the full range of transport modes that a person regularly used. For example, three participants owned motorcycles but only one participant used theirs during their diary period.

The most notable difference between the figures reported by participants and those for New Zealand overall is the large difference in proportion of trips made as a car passenger. Some participants, in their diaries, described the mode used for a trip as “car” without specifying whether they were the driver or a passenger. In some cases, I have been able to cross-check this detail, but there may be an element of error in the proportion of trip legs attributed to drivers and passengers. Taking drivers and passengers together, 76% of trip legs

in this research, and 79% of trip legs in New Zealand, were undertaken by car or van.[19] While study results should be treated with some caution in this respect, it seems likely that participants had broadly representative levels of car use overall.

The proportion of trip legs undertaken by bicycle was higher for participants than for New Zealand. The main reasons for this are two-fold. First, bicycle use is higher in Christchurch than it is in other parts of New Zealand. Data from the 2013 New Zealand Census of Populations and Dwellings show that travel to work by bicycle on census day in Christchurch was 6%, whereas in New Zealand as a whole it was only 2% (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).[20] Second, this research took place primarily during summer, whereas the Household Travel Survey (the source of the New Zealand figures in the table) takes place on a rolling cohort basis on every day of the year. I undertook this research during summer to enhance the likelihood of participants travelling by a variety of modes (and therefore reflecting on a variety of different travel situations); this may have resulted in a higher proportion of trips by bicycle than would have been the case if the research had taken place in winter.

I recruited participants from Toastmasters clubs to attain a diverse cohort. Participants were varied in terms of gender, age, income, occupation, and the use of different transport modes. In no category were participants completely representative of the wider population, as would be expected for a small, in-depth, qualitative study. However, in each respect there was a range of participants, and this should help to ensure that the resulting data incorporate a

[19] Rounding is responsible for the summation of participants' driving trips (68%) and passengering trips (7%) amounting to 76%.

[20] Travel to work by bicycle on census day has been either 5% or 6% for Christchurch in the 2001, 2006, and 2013 censuses (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), suggesting that this is not an anomalous result due to census day circumstances such as regional weather variations.

spectrum of perspectives. Drawing the sample from Toastmasters clubs was broadly effective, but in future studies researchers should, in particular, seek to include more comprehensive coverage of different occupational groups.

4.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups were included in the research for three broad reasons. First, they provided a social setting in which to explore shared meanings. Second, they encouraged participants to start thinking about how social meanings might influence transport practices. Third, they introduced participants to the research topic, minimising the need for instructions for the subsequent diary exercise. I review each of these features of focus groups briefly below before going on to explain the focus group design.

Focus groups provided a social setting in which I was able to explore the nature and features of transport related social meanings. Specifically, focus groups were designed to encourage discussions that would allow me to identify meanings and the extent to which they were shared among participants. Participants in focus groups often explicitly agree, disagree, question, support, or challenge one another, and this interaction between participants can help reveal shared norms and meanings that may not otherwise be discussed (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Dittmar, 1992; Morgan, 1997).

Focus groups were also used to encourage participants to start thinking and talking about how social meanings might influence their own and other people's transport practices. People are not always aware of all the things that influence their practices (see section 2.3.1). People may also be reluctant to discuss the influences that social meanings have on their practices. Being influenced by social meanings, such as stereotypes and status, is widely believed to be a negative character trait; wanting to avoid association with such traits can

deter people from discussing the influences of social meanings (Bergstad et al., 2011; Dittmar, 1992; Gatersleben, 2011; Giddens, 1984; M. Jensen, 1999; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Steg, 2005). It may be easier for participants to recognise and talk about how social meanings influence other people, rather than how they, themselves, are influenced (Dittmar, 1992; M. Jensen, 1999; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006). Initially discussing others can then help research participants to reflect on, and later discuss, their own practices (Hitchings, 2012). Focus groups were used to introduce the idea of social meanings influencing other people's transport practices; this may have helped participants to later reflect on their own practices.

Focus groups were also used to introduce participants to the research topic, thus minimising the need for instructions for the subsequent diary exercise. In particular, an initial brainstorming exercise in focus groups provided a set of social meanings that could be referred to in later exercises. I borrowed examples from the brainstorming exercises for use in later instructions (negating the need to prioritise external examples), and participants, as they completed different exercises, were able to respond to the meanings that had been raised by fellow group members. Finally, focus groups can be a lot of fun (Bignante, 2010; Bloor et al., 2001; Puchta & Potter, 2004) and I hoped that beginning with a light-hearted exercise would help to prevent participant attrition before the later exercises.

I conducted eight focus groups in total, each with between two and nine participants. Most groups lasted between one hour and one hour and twenty minutes; due to time constraints one group was just under forty minutes long.

4.2.1 Focus group design

The focus group design incorporated three different discussion exercises, each one with a slightly different topic focus. In Exercise 1, participants brainstormed the social meanings associated with different modes of transport (e.g., driving, biking, or taking the bus). In Exercise 2, they discussed variations of social meanings *within* the modes (e.g., a sports car compared to an SUV, or a road bicycle compared to a mountain bike). In Exercise 3, I asked participants to focus on whether, and how, social meanings influenced other people's transport practices. The next three sections explain the design of each of these three focus group exercises and include brief comments on how they worked in practice. An example focus group guide is provided in Appendix B.

Exercise 1: brainstorming social meanings

In the first exercise, I asked participants to brainstorm stereotypes associated with different modes of transport.[21] To manage any potential concerns that participants might have about the social desirability of stereotyping, the instructions emphasised that participants should describe the stereotypes they were aware of, regardless of whether they agreed with those stereotypes. Devine (1989) provides successful precedent for this strategy.

Using the social setting of a focus group to explore social meanings worked well. Participants fed off one another's ideas in the brainstorming exercise, and debated meanings in ways that indicated the extent to which these were shared. At the beginning of the focus groups, some participants did exhibit signs of discomfort or caution around engaging in socially undesirable stereotyping. As participants progressed through subsequent exercises,

[21] I use the term *social meanings* in academic descriptions of my research but I used the term *stereotypes* to introduce the focus group exercises. *Stereotypes* is a commonly understood word and its use reduced the need for complex explanations. Starting with stereotypes, I was able to encourage discussion of other kinds of social meanings through later discussion prompts.

however, my impression was that they relaxed and their discomfort often lessened. Particularly, not asking participants to reflect on their own personal responses to social meanings early in the exercises appeared to improve participant comfort and to facilitate free-flowing discussions.

Exercise 1 played out slightly differently across the different groups according to the amount of time available, the number of people in the group, and how easy the participants found it to think of meanings. Some groups discussed fewer modes of transport in more detail (a minimum of three modes), while other groups discussed more modes but spent less time on each (the maximum number of modes covered was six: driving, cycling, motorcycling, walking, taking the bus, and skateboarding).

Exercise 2: describing stereotypical vehicle users

Bloor et al. (2001) recommend beginning focus groups with an exploratory exercise and then moving on to a more focused one. Accordingly, where the first exercise explored social meanings in a very general sense, the second exercise encouraged participants to focus in on meanings associated with particular vehicles. I asked participants to describe the stereotypical users of certain vehicles, again focusing on stereotypes rather than their own opinions.

Exercise 2 used photographs of different vehicles to prompt discussion. For example, when discussing cars participants were shown photographs of a sports car, a small city car, an SUV, and an older wagon or estate. Participants were asked to describe the stereotypical user of each pictured vehicle. Each group saw a maximum of four sets of images: cars, motorcycles, bicycles and "other". "Other" included images of a bus, a skateboard, an unpowered scooter, and some walking feet. The images used in the first focus group are

shown in Figure 2; some images were varied for subsequent groups to diversify the cues given.

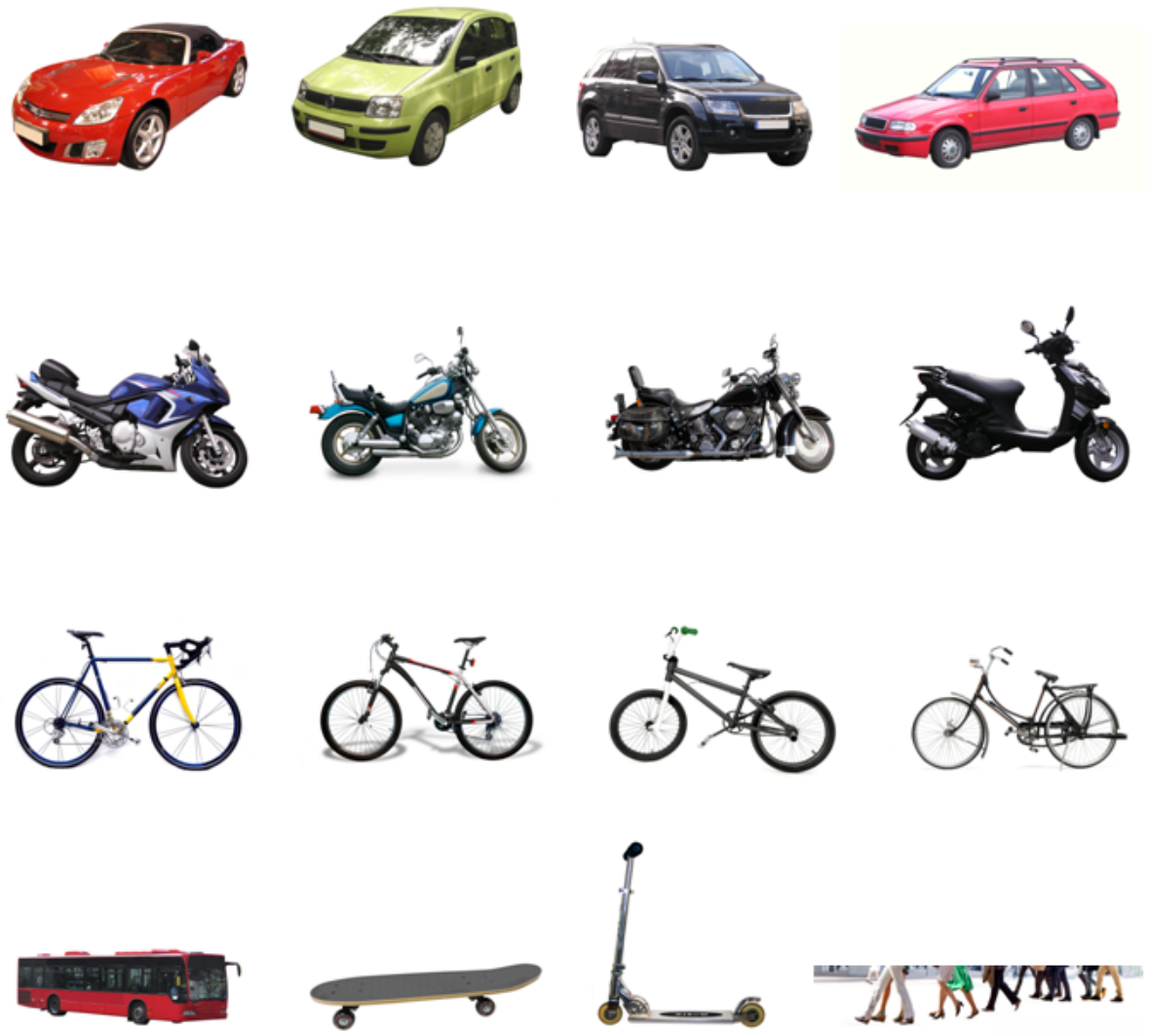

Figure 2: Images used in Focus Group 1

Note. The image of feet was deliberately cropped to minimise the visibility of the personal characteristics of the people walking and the features of their environment. I was unable to find a picture of walking feet with no contextual background so resorted to cropping as much of the background out as possible.

I used photographs as prompts in this exercise for several reasons. Most importantly, using photographs provided confidence that participants knew what kind of vehicle they were discussing without having to rely on participant knowledge of vehicle makes and models, or on potentially leading descriptions (Collier, 1957). Further, literature suggests that

photographs prompt participant reflections, associations, recognition of polysemousness, and latent visual memories that purely discursive exercises do not (Bignante, 2010; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Collier, 1957; Harper, 2002; Wagner, 1979). Following a purely discursive exercise with a visual one had potential, then, to extend the range of discussions that might take place.

In Exercise 2, participants generally discussed fewer social meanings, but in considerably more detail, than they had in Exercise 1. Despite this, there were some differences between groups in terms of how many meanings they discussed in the time allocated to the exercise and how much detail they provided. Together, Exercise 1 and Exercise 2 successfully enabled participants to explore a range of social meanings associated with different vehicles in Christchurch.

Exercise 3: identifying influences of social meanings on transport practices

The first two exercises contributed to the first research goal by exploring the social meanings associated with transport. The third exercise moved away from exploring social meanings, to considering the influences of these meanings on transport practices (the second research goal). In line with the idea that research participants might find it easier to identify how social meanings influence other people's practices rather than their own, the exercise was framed as being exclusively about other people. In Exercise 3, I asked participants to describe how people they knew matched, or did not match, the social meanings associated with their transport practices. Follow-up questions probed participants' perceptions of other people's awareness of social meanings and responses to them.

Exercises 1 and 2 were highly effective, but Exercise 3 worked less well. Some participants struggled to identify the influences of social meanings, and the groups were generally less animated and less interactive during Exercise 3. Participants did answer the

questions asked but, in retrospect, other approaches may have more effectively explored the influences of social meanings. This exercise seemed to require more reflection than the other exercises, and entailed minimal interaction between participants, and so may be better located outside a focus group setting.

The limited success of Exercise 3 did not substantially impact on my ability to address the second research goal. Later diary and interview completion provided ample opportunities to investigate the influences of social meanings on transport practices. There is also evidence in diary and interview data that Exercise 3 did prompt some participants to start thinking about the influences of social meanings, and so Exercise 3 may have indirectly facilitated later reflections.

Most groups completed all three of the focus group exercises. The group with the tightest time constraint completed Exercises 2 and 3 but not Exercise 1; in contrast, the group with the largest number of participants spent so long on Exercise 1 (incorporating much detailed discussion without the need for prompts) that Exercise 2 was largely omitted. Even including the groups that completed all three exercises, no two groups provided the same extent, quality, and focus of discussion. In the wider context of the eight groups, the omission of one exercise in each of two groups had little influence on the overall quality and type of data collected. In general, focus groups were good fun, there was a lot of laughter, and some participants did comment on having enjoyed the experience; this may have encouraged participants to continue on to the next exercise in the research.

At the very end of each focus group, participants were asked to start keeping a travel diary exploring their own connections with transport-related social meanings. The next section discusses the diary method.

4.3 Diaries

Diaries were used primarily to explore how social meanings influenced participants' transport practices (the second research goal). A diary exercise was chosen for three reasons. First, it allowed the collection of rich, exploratory data that helped to generate in-depth understandings of how participants responded to social meanings. Second, it encouraged participants to consider different contexts and variability of transport practices and experiences over time. Third, it allowed participants time to reflect on issues they may not have considered before. After a brief description of the diary exercise, these different elements of rationale are explained in more detail below. Further details of the diary exercise and its outcomes are available in two papers (Fitt, 2014b, 2015). A copy of the diary guide is provided in Appendix C.

This research used a purpose-designed diary method called the Repeat Question Diary (RQD). In an RQD exercise, participants answer the same question many times over several days. The RQD is a hybrid of two established methods, the Twenty Statements Test (TST) and qualitative diaries. Participants in a TST quickly provide up to 20 short answers to a single question, such as "Who am I?" (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954).[22] Diaries come in varied forms but, importantly for this research, can require participants to make a series of detailed descriptive entries over a period of time (see for example de Vet, 2013; Holliday, 2007; Latham, 2003; Meth, 2003). In an RQD exercise, participants answer the same question multiple times (as in a TST exercise), but they do so in the form of a series of detailed and descriptive diary entries.

[22] For more recent examples of research using the TST method see Murtagh et al. (2012a), Grace and Cramer (2003), and Watkins, Yau, Dahlin, and Wondimu (1997).

This hybrid form capitalises on the benefits of TST and diary methods while minimising their flaws. The TST has been successfully used to demonstrate some of the ways in which people associate with social meanings around transport (Murtagh et al., 2012a). Solicited diaries, compared to the TST, collect richer, more context specific data and encourage deeper participant reflection. A hybrid method borrowing simplicity from the TST and depth from diary methods can collect rich data about social meanings while avoiding the problems of attrition that sometimes plague diary exercises (Alaszewski, 2006; de Vet, 2013; Fitt, 2014b; Joshi et al., 2001; Palen & Salzman, 2002; Pickard, 2007; Symon, 2004).

Rich and detailed data are important because otherwise the influence of social meanings is very difficult to interpret. Murtagh et al.'s (2012a, p. 517) TST question "When it comes to how I travel, who am I?" yielded short answers including "I am female" (Murtagh, 2012, p. 679). It is impossible to know what such a statement meant to the person who wrote it, and the responses to the TST question turned out to be very difficult to analyse (N. Murtagh, personal communication, September 25, 2014). The rationale for converting the TST to a detailed diary exercise then, included the hope that diary keeping would encourage participants to explain their answers in sufficient detail to allow meaningful analysis. This hope turned out to be well-founded and the results sections of this thesis include numerous diary extracts in which participants explain social meanings and their influences in detail (see section 6.2.3, for example, which foregrounds participant reflections on gendered social meanings and driving).

Transport practices are multiply determined, contextual, and variable. Most people use more than one mode of transport, can switch between different transport identities, have more than one social role, and have a collection of attitudes and opinions that vary

contextually and can even conflict with one another (Cook et al., 2015; Dickinson et al., 2009; Gardner & Abraham, 2007; Meth, 2003; Murtagh et al., 2012a). The RQD exercise acknowledges multiplicity through (like the TST) encouraging participants to give more than one answer to the same question. It also facilitates contextually dependent answers (as diaries do) through taking place over time (Alaszewski, 2006; Corti, 1993; de Vet, 2013; David Hall & Hall, 1996). Making entries on different days encourages participants to represent varied experiences and to include answers that are only relevant to some contexts. Discontinuous diary keeping can even encourage participants to express contradictions and breaks in logic (Meth, 2003). Many of the participants in the RQD exercise did provide varied and context dependent reflections in their diary entries (Fitt, 2014b).

Exercises over time also encourage participant reflection. In section 2.3.1, I argued that social meanings might influence practices on a non-conscious, non-discursive level. People often fail to consciously recognise much of the detail of their everyday lives, but when invited to reflect they can sometimes bring previously unnoticed elements of their practices into a conscious and discursive realm (Hitchings, 2012; Latham, 2003; Seamon, 1979, 2015). In particular, Latham (2003) notes that diary keeping can encourage participants to reflect in a way that facilitates more conscious awareness of their practices. The awareness promoted by diary keeping may also encourage people to better understand their relationship to social meanings such as norms (Simon & Trötschel, 2008). I hoped, therefore, that diary keeping would help participants consciously appreciate the influences of social meanings, and would enable talk-based research to access observations that would not otherwise be made. The RQD's encouragement of reflection turned out to be its strongest feature. The resulting data contain numerous examples of participants noticing things they had not previously noticed, and even analysing their own practices for the influences of social meanings (Fitt, 2015).

An added (and unanticipated) benefit of the RQD method was that participants really enjoyed it. Other diary exercises have struggled with participant motivation and retention (Alaszewski, 2006; de Vet, 2013; Palen & Salzman, 2002; Symon, 2004) but the RQD did not (completion rates are discussed in the next section). In particular, participants enjoyed the self-discovery that resulted from the reflection in which they were engaged (Fitt, 2015).

4.3.1 RQD design

Participants in this RQD exercise answered the same TST-style question multiple times over a seven day period. The question was "When I travelled today, who was I?". Participants voice recorded their answers following the instruction:

> Ask yourself the question, begin speaking about it, talk off the cuff until you run out of things to say (there is no time limit and no lights!).[23] Then ask yourself the question again, pick a different answer and talk about that until you run out of things to say.

Participants voice recorded their diary entries. I encouraged voice recording rather than writing in an attempt to make RQD completion quick, with a low time and energy burden, and low likelihood of promoting attrition. At the end of the exercise, participants reported preferring voice recording to writing primarily because it was easy and quick (Fitt, 2014b). Participants also described liking audio-recording because they found it easier to express themselves, and particularly their emotions and experiences, through speaking (Fitt, 2015). There are also some indications that participants self-edit less in oral than written communication, and that this may reduce editing that obscures the influences of social meanings (Fitt, 2015).

[23] Toastmasters clubs use a traffic light system to signal how much time remains of a speaker's time allocation.

Most participants used their own mobile phones or laptops to make recordings but several borrowed recording devices owned by the University of Canterbury. Some participants did need support and encouragement to use recording technology in the early stages of their diaries but all participants did successfully create audio files. One participant (who had considerable expertise with mobile phone technology) accidentally deleted all of his audio files while showing someone else how to perform a factory reset on a mobile phone. This was a considerable loss to the project but may not be any more likely than a participant losing or damaging a paper diary.

Of the 25 participants who started the RQD exercise, all successfully created diary entries and proceeded to take part in individual interviews.[24] Two participants completed only five days of diary entries instead of the requested seven, and this meant "full completion" was only achieved by 92% of participants. One participant completed an eighth diary entry, as she felt she had more to say after the seventh day. Alongside their voice recordings, participants completed a table detailing the travel they had undertaken, including the duration, mode, and purpose of each trip.

Audio-recorded diary entries ranged between 19 seconds and 13 minutes in duration, and most of the entries (64%) were between 2 and 5 minutes long.[25] The mean length (3 minutes and 48 seconds) and median length (3 minutes and 35 seconds) were both within 30 seconds of a suggested length of 4 minutes per entry.[26] Two participants who were guests at

[24] The participant who accidentally deleted his entries did not manage to submit audio files so data exist for only 24 participants. This participant did, however, complete the exercise and so is included in the completion rate.

[25] The 19 second entry was made by a participant who stayed at home all day on that occasion.

[26] Pilot participants reported that having no time limit at all was disconcerting so, with later participants, I suggested a diary entry length of 4 minutes but emphasised that any length of entry was

the Toastmasters meeting where they were recruited completed slightly shorter diary entries, with an average length of 2 minutes and 20 seconds per entry. This suggests that Toastmasters may find it easier than non-Toastmasters to make long recordings; that said, the two guests did provide good quality, useful diary entries. Overall, RQD completion rates were high and the method generated a larger amount of data than I had anticipated.

The RQD method was very successful in collecting rich, varied, and reflective data through a process that participants enjoyed and generally successfully finished. It was, however, time consuming to conduct. Participants needed encouragement to make diary entries, and reassurance that apparently mundane entries were useful. Participants in other diary exercises have expressed similar concerns (Middleton, 2010; Spowart & Nairn, 2014). I encouraged participants to submit their diary entries every day and I replied (often within minutes of receiving an entry) commending a participant's efforts and encouraging them to keep going. Several participants commented that they had been impressed and motivated by this response, particularly as it reinforced to them how highly I valued their contributions.

After the RQD exercise, all participants were invited to attend an individual interview; the next section explains the interview method.

4.4 Interviews

Interviews were included in the research primarily to supplement the RQD exercise. Including an interview allowed me to clarify anything in participant diaries that was unclear or ambiguous, to probe or challenge interesting points, and to ask participants to expand on issues relevant to the research. The RQD exercise allowed participants considerable freedom

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acceptable. Different people speak at very different speeds so time has only a loose relationship with volume of content and an even looser one with quality and relevance. The 4 minute guideline was therefore driven by concerns around participant burden (half an hour in total seemed a reasonable request) rather than content.

to reflect their own priorities, the later interview allowed me to ensure that the research questions could be answered.

Interviewing is one of the methods most commonly used in social science and in human geography research (Cochrane, 2014). The method has a long history of providing useful information and many texts have been written on how to successfully conduct interview exercises. I drew on a range of literature and developed a semi-structured interview format suited to the research topic. I found Dunn (2010), Roulston (2010), and Rubin and Rubin (2012) to be particularly instructive, especially in terms of planning and structuring the interviews, designing questions, conducting the interviews, and reflecting on my own performance to improve my skill and effectiveness as an interviewer.

4.4.1 Interview design

Interviews took place soon after a participant's diary completion and in a reasonably quiet location of the participant's choosing (usually a café, meeting room, home, or park). One interview was conducted over the telephone at a participant's request. Interviews ranged between 38 and 88 minutes in length, with a mean of 65 minutes.

In advance of each interview, I developed a unique interview guide with questions tailored to the participant's own experiences and context. A copy of an example interview guide is provided in Appendix D. Some standard questions probed subjects likely to be relevant to all participants. Following Dunn (2010) and Roulston (2010), I deliberately developed questions using diverse questioning styles, hoping that this would yield more diverse answers. The interviews were structured into five main sections.

The first section reviewed the RQD exercise. Questions focused on how long the diary took to complete, when it was completed, whether participants enjoyed it or found it to

be a chore, and how participants felt about audio-recording their entries. This topic facilitated ongoing development of the RQD exercise, and particularly of the support I gave to participants. It also provided easy questions to start the interview (Dunn, 2010), and later served as a valuable source of information for methods papers (Fitt, 2014b, 2015). The questions used in this section were simple, open, standard across most participants, and designed primarily to be easy to answer.

The second section of questions clarified anything that was unclear in participant diaries. For example, Tanya used the word "greenie" in two separate parts of her diary; in the interview I was able to clarify that in one instance she was referring to being new and inexperienced, whilst in the other she was referring to environmentalism. The questions in this section were participant-specific and asked directly whether a particular interpretation of a comment was correct.

The third section of questions probed interesting aspects of RQD contents and sought to fill apparent gaps. Most questions were participant-specific, following on from diary entries, but some questions successfully used with one participant were later used with other participants. For example, I asked several participants whether they thought they matched the social meanings associated with their car. Following Dunn (2010) and Roulston (2010), this section employed a variety of questions including open questions, closed questions, factual questions, opinion questions, storytelling questions (such as "can you tell me about how you started motorcycling?"), and devil's advocate questions (such as "some people call the bus a 'loser cruiser' have you heard that?"). This section was usually the longest part of interviews, and provided much of the data referred to in the results chapters of this thesis.

The fourth section expanded on the RQD exercise by challenging participants to go beyond the experiences in their diary. Particularly, this section encouraged participants to talk about transport modes they rarely or never used and, as such, allowed a focus on deterrent social meanings that might not be evident if participants only discussed existing practices. This section included *projective questions* along with the other question types mentioned above. Projective questions require participants to imagine fictional scenarios (Puchta & Potter, 2004), such as their ideal car journey, winning a motorcycle, or having access to a teleporter.

The fifth section of the interviews investigated the relative importance of social meanings and other influences on transport practices. This section used a variety of question types. Data collected here have been primarily used to inform assessments of whether social meanings were major or minor influences on participants' transport practices. Major and minor influences are discussed in more detail in section 7.1.2.

Overall, interviews were a valuable addition to the RQD exercise, particularly because they enabled me to clarify, probe, and extend the content of diary entries.

4.5 Reflections Regarding a Reliance on Talk-Based Methods

This research is talk-based, despite acknowledgement that talk-based methods have some limitations. The extent to which different aspects of everyday practices can be represented through talk-based research methods is hotly debated (cf. Hitchings, 2012; Kusenbach, 2003; Latham, 2003; Merriman, 2014; Middleton, 2010; Pile, 2010; Pow, 2000; Spinney, 2007, 2011; Vergunst, 2011). Some authors argue that language is insufficient to allow us to express some feelings or experiences in words (Pow, 2000; Spinney, 2007, 2011), and some contend that we cannot express those influences on our practices of which we are

not consciously aware (Bourdieu, 1984; Pile, 2010). Advocates of non-representational theories accordingly argue for the use of non-talk-based methods, and especially for various kinds of mobile ethnography (Adey, 2010; Merriman, 2014; Spinney, 2011). Others argue that it may be possible to bring some non-conscious elements of practices, and non-linguistically-based experiences, into conscious consideration and into a discursive realm for the purposes of research (Giddens, 1984; Hitchings, 2012; Latham, 2003; Merriman, 2014; Middleton, 2010; Pile, 2010; Spinney, 2011).

The use of a talk-based approach was primarily a response to the difficulty I anticipated in conducting the research in any other way. Social meanings are difficult to observe. One usually cannot see or hear a person making an association between a mode of transport and something else unless they put it into words. We know that buses are associated with "losers" because of the language used to represent that connection, not because we can observe the connection in any other way. The influences of known social meanings can be tested using experimental methods. For example, Yeung and von Hippel (2008) used a driving simulator to show that participants' driving safety could be influenced by being reminded of a stereotype. However, to design an effective test of this kind, one would first need to be familiar with a social meaning and its likely influences. This means that it would not be practical to initially explore social meanings using experimental methods.

It would also be excessively costly and time consuming to conduct extensive tests for the influence of all transport related social meanings using experimental methods. These methods require the isolation and systematic variation of the factors being tested and are not necessarily well suited for investigating in-situ, everyday behaviours from a social science perspective (Silva, 2008). However, testing for suspected non-conscious influences of a

single meaning, or small subset of meanings, might well be plausible. This research used talk-based methods to investigate a wide range of social meanings with the hope that future research will then be able to efficiently focus on those aspects of the influences of social meanings that talk-based methods cannot access. In chapter 9, I discuss how effective talk-based methods have been in this research and make some suggestions about priorities for future research using different methods.

4.6 Analysis

This chapter has explained the use of focus groups, diaries, and interviews. The associated exercises between them collected over 45 hours of audio-recordings. I now briefly describe the analysis methods used to make sense of this mass of data.

All research exercises were audio-recorded and transcribed (the transcription symbols used are shown in Appendix E). Transcriptions were uploaded to NVivo, where they remain linked to the corresponding audio-recordings. Transcriptions have facilitated visual scanning, coding, and text search analysis exercises. I have, however, also regularly referred back to the original audio-recordings, which retain features of speech, such as intonation, that are never fully captured in transcriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Roulston, 2010).

I used thematic analysis to generate the results detailed in subsequent chapters. Figure 3 shows a summary of the analysis protocol, and Figures 4 to 6 show more detail of each step and sub-step. This protocol was unique to this project but drew heavily on guides to thematic analysis. In this regard, I have found the following to be instructive: Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006), Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland (2006), Richards (2009), and Wolcott (1994). The references accompanying the figures indicate where a certain step has been particularly informed by literature; some steps are

directly prescribed in guides to thematic analysis, others result from my interpretation of the combined messages of several texts.

Analysis broadly followed this protocol, but while the protocol suggests a neat and comprehensive linear process, the reality was more messy, fluid, iterative, and evolving. In the interests of pragmatism, for example, memos and codebook entries were created when they appeared useful rather than for every data item and every code. Elsewhere, I followed the protocol, and the advice on which it was based, more thoroughly. For example, following Boyatzis (1998), I gave every codebook entry a label, a definition, a description, several examples, and notes on what should be excluded; I also noted, for each, the date on which it was last revised. An example of a codebook entry is shown in Table 3.

One of the limitations of this study (alongside other individual doctoral studies (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006)) is that the coding exercise was completed by one person and only discussed with supervisors. This means that I was unable to conduct the inter-rater reliability checks advocated by some experts (see particularly Braun & Clarke, 2006). During analysis and writing, I regularly returned to the data, as well as to the codebook and memos, to check my earlier coding and interpretations so as to ensure consistency as much as possible.

Table 3: Example codebook entry

Label:	Environmental concerns
Definition:	Anything that states (or suggests) a concern for the environment.
Description:	Look for words like environment, fuel, gas guzzling, greenie, pollution.
Examples:	"Oh you're very green Adrian"; "doing your little bit for the world by not burning fuel"; "they do something for the environment and are environmentally friendly".
Exclusions:	Fuel efficiency relating to financial cost goes in the "Fuel efficiency" node. Comments about how nice (or otherwise) the environment is to be travelling through go in the "Environs" node.
Date last revised:	19/06/14

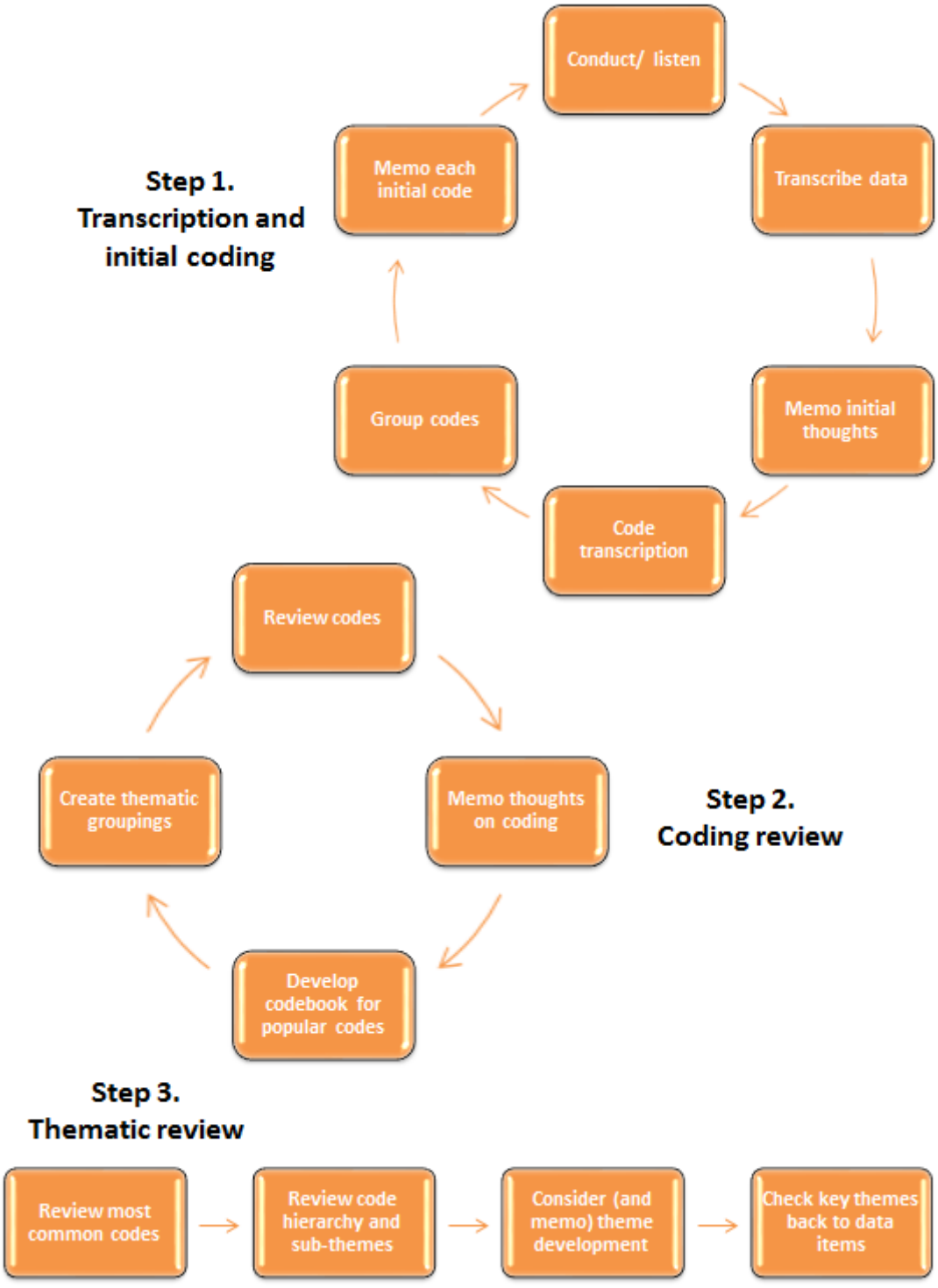

Figure 3: Analysis protocol overview

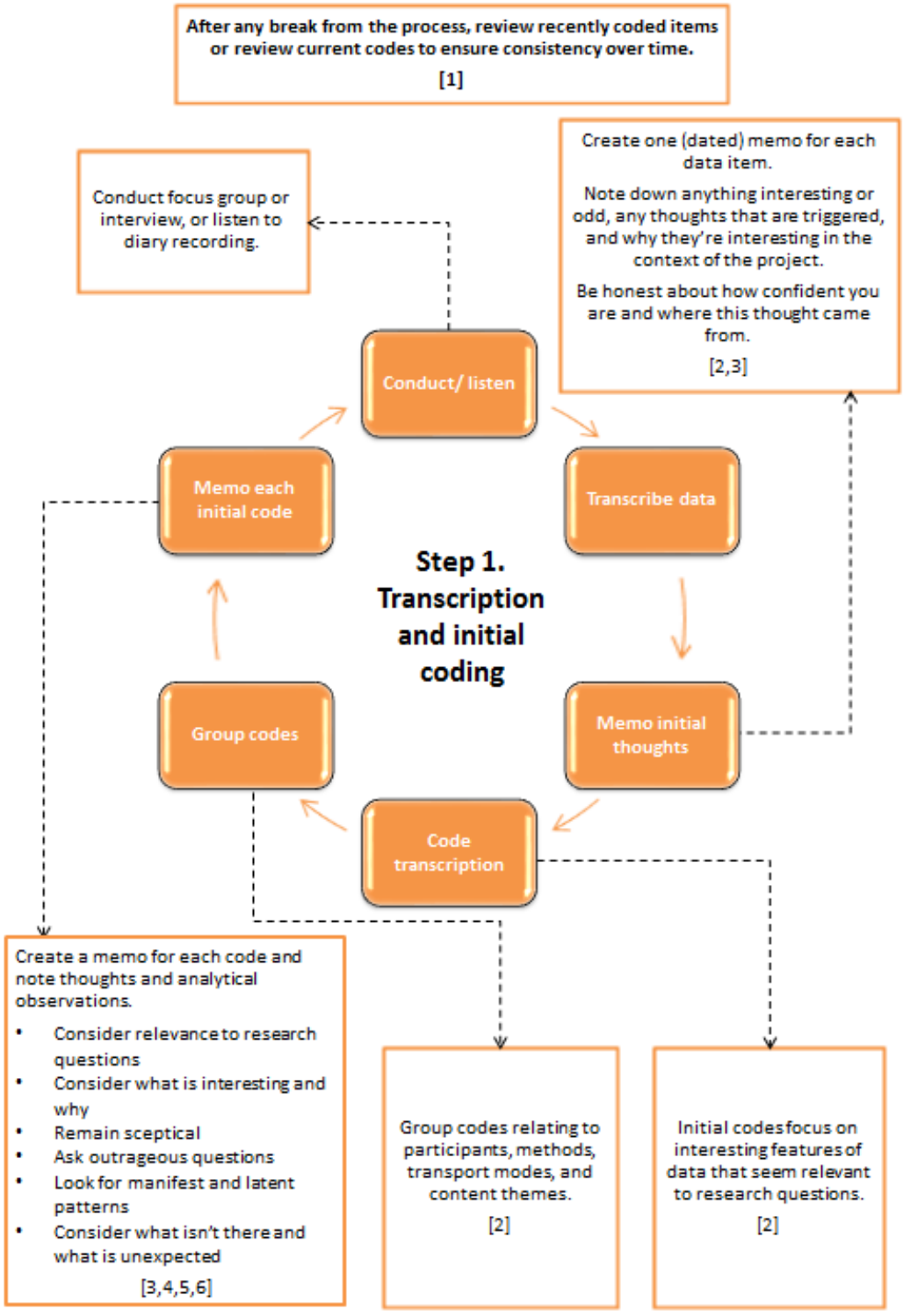

Figure 4: Analysis protocol, step 1

Note. *References are indicated in the figure by numbers in brackets. These numbers correspond to the following references. [1] Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006); [2] Lofland et al. (2006); [3] Richards (2009); [4] Boyatzis (1998); [5] Wolcott (1994); [6] Miles and Huberman (1994).*

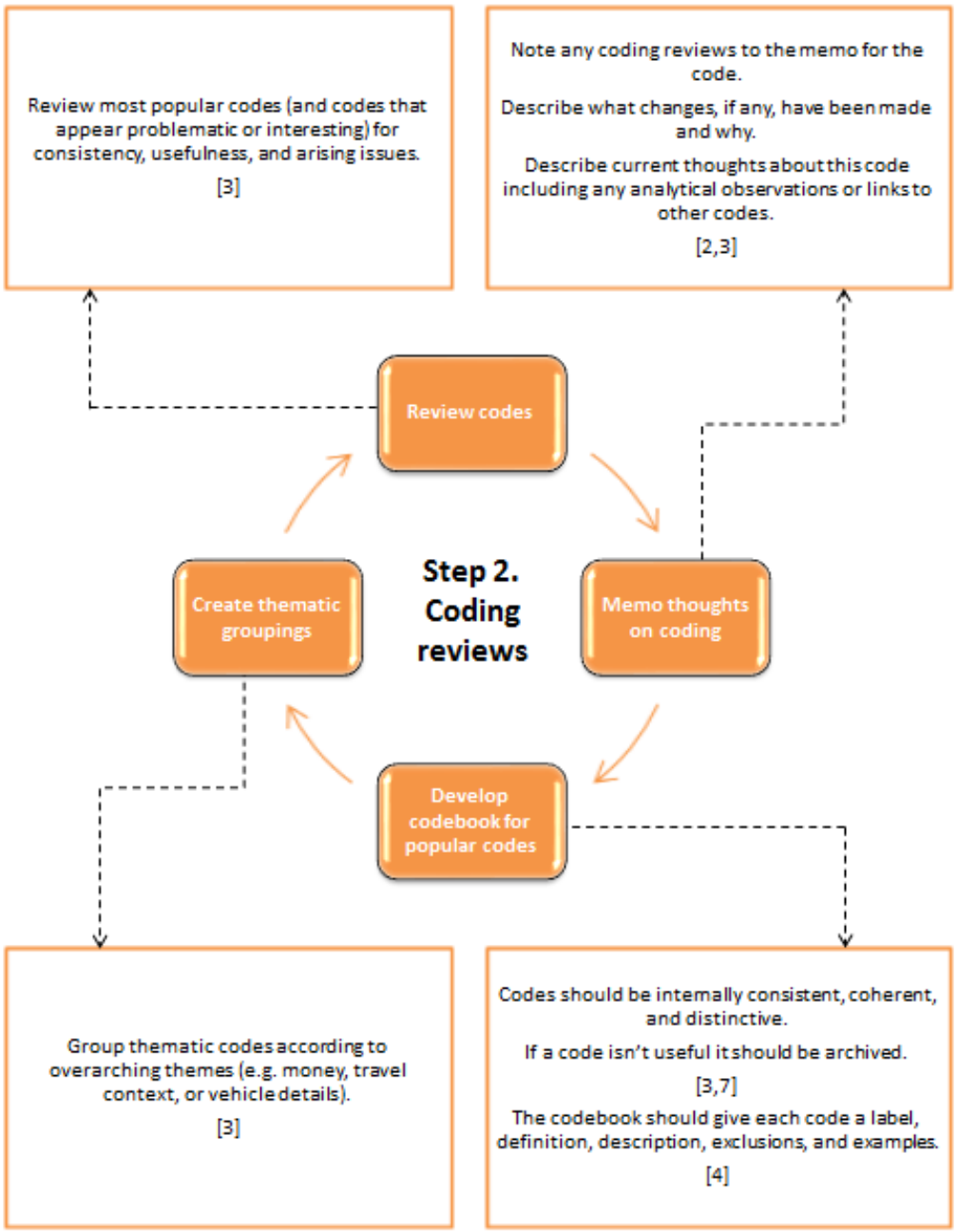

Figure 5: Analysis protocol, step 2

Note. *References are indicated in the figure by numbers in brackets. These numbers correspond to the following references. [2] Lofland et al. (2006); [3] Richards (2009); [4] Boyatzis (1998); [7] Braun and Clarke (2006).*

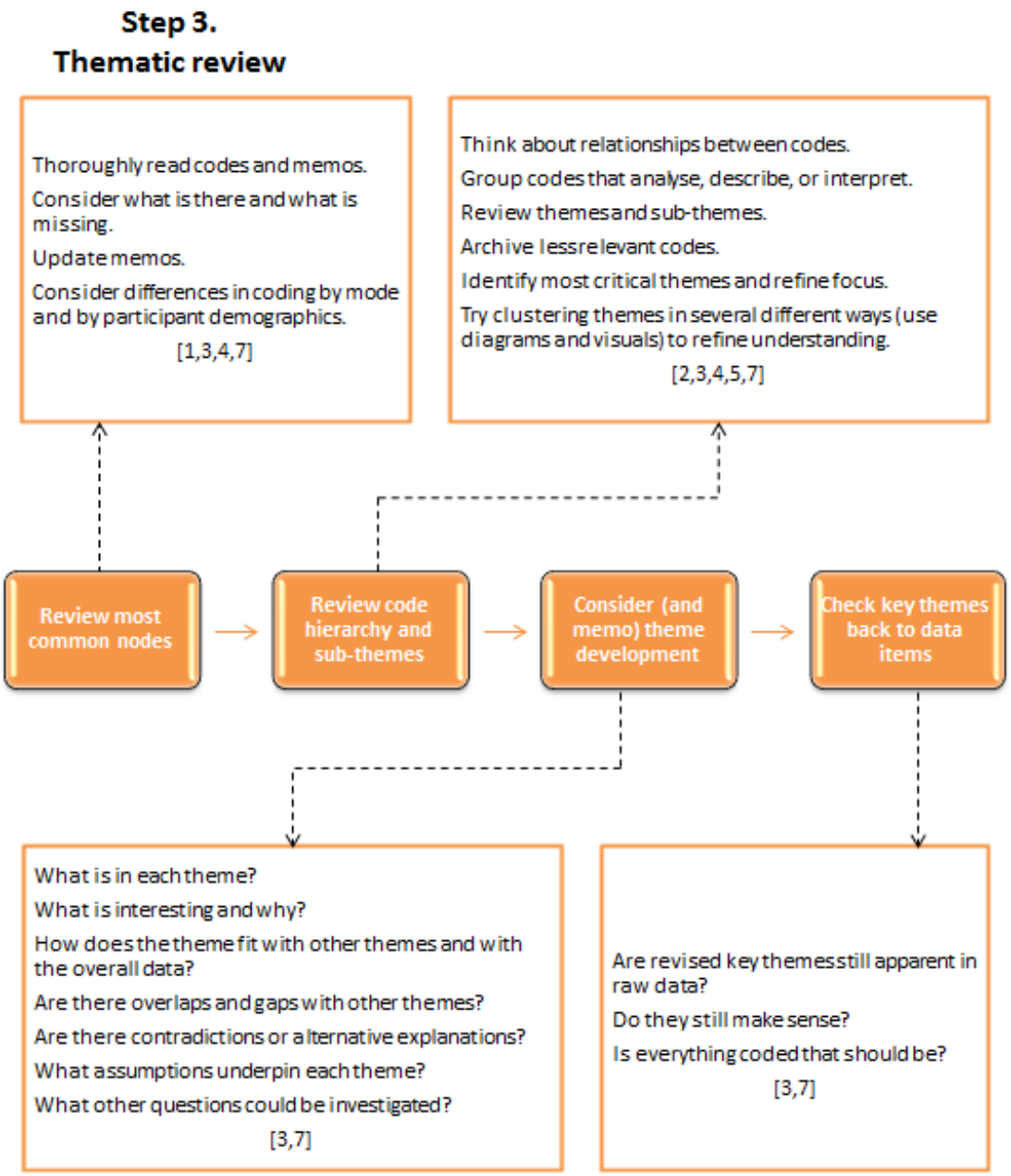

Figure 6: Analysis protocol, step 3

Note. *References are indicated in the figure by numbers in brackets. These numbers correspond to the following references. [1] Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006); [2] Lofland et al. (2006); [3] Richards (2009); [4] Boyatzis (1998); [5] Wolcott (1994); [7] Braun and Clarke (2006).*

4.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have described the research design and the methods used to collect and analyse the empirical data needed to address the project's three research goals. Thirty-two participants volunteered to take part in the research, most of them after having heard a recruitment speech at a Toastmasters club. The participant cohort was not completely representative of the wider population, but did incorporate a range of demographic profiles and transport practices. Participants first took part in focus group exercises primarily designed to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch. They then each kept a Repeat Question Diary, providing multiple answers to the question "When I travelled today, who was I?". The RQD exercise began to investigate the influences of social meanings and was supplemented with individual interviews. In interviews, I was able to encourage participants to expand on the content in their diary entries. I did not expect the use of a suite of talk-based methods to shed light on all of the influences of social meanings, but to provide a rich starting point on which further investigations could build. I analysed the data collected using thematic analysis and by following a detailed analysis protocol.

This chapter has outlined the methods used to collect the empirical data needed for this research. The next chapter is the first of three that focus on using the data collected to address the research goals.

Chapter 5: Results—Exploring Social Meanings

This chapter addresses the first research goal: to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch. It provides detailed accounts of the social meanings that participants most commonly described. It also highlights the complexity of some of the meanings, in part by foregrounding the different ways in which participants interpreted social meanings. Further, it identifies the similarities and differences between these meanings and those described in literature and reviewed in chapter 3. By exploring the social meanings that are associated with different transport practices, the chapter provides a solid foundation for investigating the influences that social meanings have on those practices; that is the second research goal and is tackled primarily in the next chapter.

This chapter is divided into five sections, each of which covers the social meanings associated with a single transport mode. I address social meanings relating to driving first, then those relating to cycling, motorcycling, bus use, and, finally, walking. One of the advantages of a multi-modal study is the ability to see similarities and differences across different modes; I comment on these briefly where appropriate.

The chapter draws primarily on data from the focus groups. For ease of reference, the eight focus groups have been numbered FG1 to FG8. All focus group extracts are labelled with both the names of the individuals being quoted, and with the number of the focus group from which the extract is taken.

The results reported here reflect a high degree of consistency in the social meanings identified by different focus groups. The same themes were often discussed in similar ways by different groups, thus providing group-to-group data validation (Morgan, 1997). For

example, six of the eight groups discussed Asian drivers, seven out of eight mentioned an association between cycling and environmental concerns, and seven out of eight also discussed bus user ages.

In focus group Exercise 1, participants brainstormed the social meanings associated with different transport modes; in Exercise 2, they looked at images of vehicles and described the stereotypical users of those vehicles. I selected the images used in Exercise 2 and so guided the focus of discussions; I had comparatively little influence on the discussions participants pursued in Exercise 1. In the descriptions that follow, I comment on the extent of my own influence where this seems important.

Participants described social meanings from their own points of view, and the resulting data do not always align with what mode users or experts might expect. For example, a participant might describe a certain motorcycle as likely to be ridden by a bearded, leather-clad, dedicated motorcycle enthusiast, while a motorcycle retailer might know that the market for that kind of motorcycle is clean shaven, suit-wearing commuters. Here I present what the research participants described from the position of their own expertise, whether or not that tallies with the knowledge of other experts. Knowing how participants themselves understood social meanings is a good foundation for subsequent investigations of the influences that social meanings have on these participants' transport practices.

5.1 Driving

Focus group participants described social meanings associated with numerous discrete subgroups of drivers. They did not express any strong unifying social meanings, and rarely mentioned a social norm of driving. The focus on discrete groups—often defined

according to personal characteristics or vehicle types—reflects the widespread nature of car use, and its failure as a differentiating symbol (see section 3.1.1). Below, I describe some of the subgroups of drivers that were commonly discussed, and explore some of the social meanings with which they were associated.

Social meanings associated with seven subgroups of drivers are featured here: Asian drivers; boy racers, bogans, and hoons; drivers of European vehicles; of SUVs and larger cars; of small city cars; of older vehicles; and of sports cars. The focus group discussions for each category of social meaning tended to focus on one or two prominent themes; for example, comments about Asian drivers had a theme of speed, comments about SUVs and larger cars centred on family responsibilities and power, and comments about small city cars contained a strong gender element. Social meanings for each subgroup are described in more detail below, drawing out links to literature where appropriate.

5.1.1 Asian drivers

Some of the most commonly discussed social meanings single out Asian drivers. Five of the eight focus groups raised the topic of Asian drivers without prompting. In a sixth group, Asian drivers were discussed when I asked whether there were any social meanings connected to driver ethnicity. Two groups began their brainstorming exercise with social meanings associated with Asian drivers, perhaps suggesting a salience or prominence of these meanings for participants (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; Newcomb, 1950).

There were two distinct social meanings associated with Asian drivers, and in five of the six discussions both of these were raised. First, Asian drivers were considered to drive slowly, be hesitant (especially around junctions), and have low overall levels of driving skill. Some groups attributed these perceived characteristics to different conditions, or cultures of

driving, in Asian countries. Second, a subset of young Asian drivers was described as driving fast in very flash or "souped-up" cars. Sometimes participants described these cars as having been paid for by the young person's wealthy parents. This extract from FG8 clearly demonstrates the coexistence of these two social meanings:

> Helen: Ok, who's going to yell out something [to start the discussion]?
>
> Margaret: Asian drivers being bad drivers.
>
> Carrie: I was going to say that one ((laughs)). That always seems to be like the biggest one.
>
> Helen: Are they bad drivers in any particular ways?
>
> Anna: They don't know how to use indicators.
>
> Helen: Right.
>
> Carrie: And they like seem to be quite fast, and they always seem to be in little kind of boy-racer type cars.
>
> Margaret: Ah I had the opposite, they're slow.
>
> Carrie: Yeah, but then you get them in the other cars and they're like really, really slow.

Social meanings associated with Asian drivers were clearly identified by participants in most focus groups. To the best of my knowledge, these stereotypes have not been comprehensively discussed in academic literature, but anecdotal references suggest they are understood well beyond this participant cohort. For example, George Takei, an actor who

played the helmsman of the USS Enterprise in the Star Trek franchise, joked on his Twitter feed about challenging Asian driver stereotypes by being the best driver in the "Federation" (https://twitter.com/GeorgeTakei/status/465874678180229120/photo/1).

5.1.2 Boy racers, bogans and hoons

Five of the focus groups discussed social meanings associated with boy racers, bogans, or hoons. Focus group discussions largely mirrored social meanings featured in literature on boy racer subcultures (Falconer & Kingham, 2007; Lumsden, 2013). Vehicles associated with these drivers were described as featuring large and noisy exhausts, and as being low-slung and modified. The drivers themselves were most frequently characterised as public nuisances, often because of the noise made by their vehicles, but sometimes for aspects of driving behaviour such as driving too fast or doing burnouts. Participants in FG3 described the drivers as often dressing in an unkempt manner, and those in FG8 explored wider social meanings around driver lifestyles and behaviours:

> Margaret: Probably a bit bogan, not really doing much with their life.
>
> Carrie: Maybe a bit uneducated. …
>
> Margaret: They'll have a lot of unpaid fines. …
>
> Anna: Car's probably been impounded. …
>
> Steph: You used to see them down Colombo Street throwing bottles at anyone who walked down.

That five out of eight groups, without any prompting, mentioned these social meanings associated with boy racers, suggests that these are prominent in the set of social meanings associated with cars and drivers in Christchurch.

5.1.3 European vehicles

In stark contrast to boy racer cars, European vehicles were described as being expensive, sophisticated, and high quality. European cars specifically mentioned included Audis, BMWs, Peugeots, and Mercedes, but most commonly participants talked about "European" cars without being more specific.

European cars were often considered to be status symbols. The social meanings that participants associated with European vehicles clearly mirror mainstream contemporary descriptions of high status vehicles provided in relevant literature—these focus on wealth and profession, features which were reflected in FG5's descriptions of a European vehicle:

> Heather: And because [this car is] European as well it sort of says, I don't know why that is-
>
> Tracy: Professional.
>
> Heather: -because it's not necessarily true but people do think European says expensive.

European vehicles were mentioned in four groups but usually briefly and with little nuance or discussion.

5.1.4 SUVs and larger cars

Family responsibilities, and particularly the school run,[27] were a strong focus for groups discussing SUVs and larger cars. Five groups mentioned the school run in connection with these vehicles. Moore (2010) and Urry (2006) have also commented on the selection of

[27] Shaw and Docherty (2014b, p. 56) define the school run as "the practice of adults driving children to their place of education".

larger cars—which are often perceived as being safer—for undertaking family responsibilities such as the school run.

Three groups also mentioned taking children to soccer. This appeared to be a reference to the wider concept of the *soccer mum* rather than a literal reference to soccer games. The online Oxford English Dictionary (n.d. Def: Soccer mom) describes the soccer mum (or "mom") as a "suburban American mother who spends much time transporting her children to athletic events, or otherwise supporting her children's activities". Carrie (FG8) applied a very similar definition to New Zealand SUV drivers:

> Mums that stay at home and don't have anything else to do with their life ((laughs)). And just drive their kids to like soccer, or whatever kind of sport that they do.

Here, the concept of a soccer mum particularly applies to wealthy women without paid employment. Not all participants associated SUVs and larger cars with soccer mums. Sunny (FG1), for example, described executive men as stereotypical drivers of these vehicles.

Ideas of wealth, class, and power are prominent throughout the social meanings associated with SUVs. In particular, participants sometimes referred to these vehicles using terms combining the name of a wealthy, upper (or upper middle) class suburb with the word "tractor". "Tractor" refers to the vehicle's size and off-road capability; although a key feature of social meanings associated with SUVs is that the vehicles are rarely, if ever, actually used off-road (Bradsher, 2002). The suburb element of the term connects owners, albeit somewhat sardonically, with the perceived wealth, class, or style of the suburb named. "Merivale tractors", "Fendalton tractors", and "Remuera tractors" were each referred to by

participants.[28] Similar terms used elsewhere include "Chelsea tractors" in England (Campbell, 2004; Massey, 2014) and "Toorak tractors" in Australia (Parslow, 2008). An earlier incarnation of the same idea can be seen in Ellis' (1989, p. 568) description of doctors "firing" their cars "into four wheel drive for the journey down the rutted mud of Eloff Street", which at the time was a prestigious Johannesburg shopping destination. *Suburban tractor* terms were present in three focus groups and a participant from a fourth group referred to Remuera tractors in his diary.

Participants associated SUVs and larger cars with status, but with a slightly different construction of status to that associated with European vehicles. Where European vehicles were associated with wealth and profession, the status of SUVs appeared to be based on the size, power, and dominance of the vehicles (see also Bradsher, 2002). Participants in FG7 described the drivers of Fendalton tractors:

> David: Well there's the four wheel drive drivers. Either the mum picking up her kids in the big flash expensive car, just hogging the road and parking just outside the school and that sort of thing, and (.) being an absolute pain.
>
> Ross: Fendalton tractor is what you're referring to.
>
> David: Fendalton tractor, yeah that's the one. Yeah, yeah. And making a hog of themselves in a car park. Or just (.) driving like an arrogant so-and-so because they've got this great big, massive vehicle that can look down on everybody else and just dominate the road.

[28] Merivale and Fendalton are Christchurch suburbs; Remuera is in Auckland.

Several other groups also mentioned these drivers behaving arrogantly and looking down on other people.

Finally, some SUVs and larger vehicles were associated with gaining access to outdoor leisure pursuits such as skiing and boating. These vehicles were described as being capable of the gravel-road driving often required to access these activities in New Zealand.[29] The vehicles used for outdoor pursuits were sometimes described as being slightly more rugged, less expensive, and in less pristine condition than suburban tractors. Although there were hints of masculine wilderness mastery (see also Bishop, 1996; Bradsher, 2002) this was a less clear theme for focus group participants than family responsibilities and urban power.

In summary, SUVs and larger cars were primarily associated with family responsibilities and particularly with driving children to school and to activities. These vehicles were also associated with wealth-based status, and with power through classed associations with particular suburbs and physical, size-based dominance. These vehicles were sometimes also described as tools for accessing remote leisure opportunities. Although SUVs and larger cars were sometimes associated with wealthy women not in paid employment, vehicles in this category were also described as being driven by male executives, parents, and men going fishing and skiing at the weekends. Females and males were described as using these vehicles in different ways, but both genders were associated with the vehicles.

5.1.5 Small city cars

Discussions about small city cars had a very strong focus on gender. Most participants described most types of cars as being driven by both males and females, but small city cars were described as being almost exclusively driven by women. In FG1, while

[29] Most of Canterbury's skifields, for example, have gravel road access only.

discussing an image of a small city car, several of the participants openly rejected the idea of a male driver.

Helen: Can you see guys driving it?

Ed: No.

John: No.

Horrace: No …

Victoria: What if it was black though? If it was black could you see guys driving it? Would that make a difference?

Horrace: No, I don't think so.

Victoria expressed some optimism that males might drive a similar car in a different colour, but met with no agreement from other participants. In FG5, Heather and Tracy looked at a different image of a small car but agreed that this car would not be driven by a man:

Heather: I've seen lots of sort of quite smart looking women driving those. I haven't actually seen any men driving them.

Tracy: No, they're not a men's car are they?

Heather: No.

The eight groups, between them, discussed images of four different small city cars but there were no specific mentions of male drivers. The association between women and small city cars may link to Berger's (1986) claim that, historically, US women's vehicle choices

were influenced by social meanings associated with attempts to restrict women's mobility. Specifically, women were associated with small, short-range, mechanically simple vehicles in response to a supposed lack of driving skill and mechanical ability, and to predominantly local travel needs (Berger, 1986).

Participants described small city cars as being suitable for women of all ages, but they were also specifically associated with old, slow, female drivers commonly referred to as "nanas". Stereotypically, all nanas drive small city cars (most often Suzukis), but not all small city cars are driven by nanas. Small city cars were also described, by participants in four groups, as "shopping baskets" or "shopping trolleys". Horrace (FG1) explained that a shopping trolley car would be used primarily for trips to the supermarket.

In summary, small city cars were stereotypically associated with female drivers and particularly with older female drivers called nanas. Small city cars were also often referred to as shopping trolleys or shopping baskets.

5.1.6 Sports cars

Participants strongly connected sports cars with a conscious desire by their drivers to project a certain kind of image and to have that image noticed by other people. Every focus group included at least one reference to the driver of a sports car being concerned about the image that the car would convey to other people. For example, the following three extracts all come from different focus groups and from discussions of different sports cars.

Ed (FG1): It's not a practical car…they just wanna be seen.

> Adrian (FG4): It would be kind of like me buying an Aston Martin. I can buy an Aston Martin, I can go 200ks an hour, but I'm going to drive along at 40 and say 'look at me, I drive an Aston!'
>
> Ross (FG7): We're talking about looks here, it's what you look like.

This level of image-consciousness was often considered superficial by participants. For example, Brendan (FG2) described the driver of such a car negatively, concluding that this person believed herself to be defined by image and valued for her possessions rather than for her personality.[30] Underlining the superficiality that participants associated with sports cars, three different groups described three different sports cars as "hairdressers' cars". Despite commonly hearing the term *hairdresser car*, I have not been able to identify an academic definition. In less formal literature, such as blogs and online forums, the hairdresser car is described as being more about appearance than performance. For example, in a forum post on car gaming enthusiast website GTPlanet, Giles Guthrie concludes: "In short then, a hairdresser's car is about style. And more specifically, about style and lack of substance. Substance is actively not desired" (Guthrie, 2003).

Participants agreed that if sports cars reflected a conscious desire by their owners to project a certain kind of image, then that image was one of wealth. Participants in all groups explicitly connected ownership of a sports car with being wealthy, beyond that however, they connected it with wanting to *display* wealth. For example, Carrie (FG8) said that a sports car was "like a show, it's like a demonstration of wealth". A distinction between European

[30] Brendan described the owner of this vehicle as a 47 year old, female, hair salon manager called Cheryl; my use of gendered language reflects his description.

vehicles as sophisticated symbols of wealth-based status, and sports cars as superficial displays of wealth warrants further investigation.

Some participants agreed that people who had high levels of long-term wealth were less likely to want to display that wealth than those with newer or less substantial riches. Basil (FG6) said that "a person who is genuinely rich doesn't have to show it", and Heather (FG5) described a hereditary millionaire as being sufficiently secure to not need an expensive car. In contrast, Tracy (FG5) described someone from a less wealthy background as being proud of his achievements and as deliberately choosing a vehicle that said "look at me". The cumulative effect of the social meanings discussed so far is that sports car drivers were commonly associated with a superficial desire to display an often newfound wealth.

Participants in three groups did acknowledge the potential experiential pleasure gained from driving a sports car. Driving a sports car for the pleasure of doing so was less derided than driving a sports car to display wealth. Focus group participants rarely connected driving sports cars to speed and risky driving behaviours, as might be expected given acknowledged connections between enthusiasm for motor racing (which may be associated with sports cars) and driver behaviour (Tranter & Warn, 2008). Several participants mentioned the speed and cornering abilities of sports cars, but social meanings associated with image and wealth were considerably more prominent in discussions.

Finally, sports cars were associated with middle-age, and to some extent with mid-life crises. Five out of eight groups mentioned a mid-life crisis or a person trying to recapture their youth, and all eight groups included at least one reference to the driver of a sports car as being middle-aged. The association with middle-age seems primarily related to the cost of owning such an expensive car and the life stage where this kind of expense is most likely to

be manageable. This dynamic around age, wealth, and perceptions of mid-life crisis is even more prominent in discussions of motorcycling and is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.2.

5.1.7 Older vehicles

Margaret (FG8) summed up the dominant theme for a group of images of older vehicles in one sentence: “It can just be that they’re lower socio-economic and they can’t afford a better car”. Where participants associated other vehicles with deliberate expressions of different elements of personal identity or social position (such as wealth, gender, or age), older vehicles were considered, above all else, to be an economic necessity. These cars were commonly described as being driven by students or the unemployed, groups generally assumed to have low levels of financial wealth. The social meanings associated with older vehicles were more similar to social meanings that literature associates with economically disadvantaged bus users than they were to any of the meanings more commonly associated with cars.

Older cars were also often described as being family vehicles. This association provides an interesting contrast to the SUVs and larger vehicles that participants associated with the school run. Where SUVs were considered to be an (often deliberate) expression of status, the older car was considered characteristic of young families under financial pressure.

In summary, all of the themes around this set of vehicles contain strong associations to people with limited financial means and imply that this vehicle is an economic necessity rather than any kind of chosen expression of identity or status.

5.1.8 Section summary

In summary, I have identified seven prominent groups of social meanings associated with cars and drivers. I showed focus group participants images of SUVs and larger cars, small city cars, sports cars, and older cars. Participants also spoke about Asian drivers, boy racers, and European vehicles. Asian drivers were stereotyped either as being slow and having low levels of driving skills, or as having flash cars and going too fast. Boy racers, bogans, and hoons were described as being noisy public nuisances with low slung vehicles and over-sized exhausts. European vehicles were considered expensive and symbols of wealth and professional status. SUVs were commonly associated with the school run and with a status based on power and dominance, as well as with access to outdoor leisure pursuits. Small city cars were almost always described as belonging to women and were also associated with the stereotype of the nana who drives slowly and cautiously. Sports cars were primarily described as vehicles designed to convey a superficial image of wealth; they were associated with middle-aged owners and sometimes with mid-life crises. Lastly, older vehicles were associated with people with limited economic means, and were not considered expressions of personal identity because of their function as economic necessities.

Participants described a rich and intricate tapestry of social meanings relating to different cars and different types of drivers. In the next sections, I describe the social meanings relating to other modes of transport before going on, in the next chapter, to discuss the influences that social meanings had on participants' transport practices.

5.2 Cycling

In this section, I discuss social meanings associated with cyclists in general before going on to consider more specifically the social meanings associated with the riders of four different kinds of bikes: road bicycles, mountain bikes, BMX or trick bicycles, and European

style commuter bicycles. It is notable that where driving was described as widespread and rarely associated with specific personal characteristics, cycling was described as unusual and connected to a range of social meanings.

5.2.1 Cyclists

Participants primarily described cyclists as being people who choose to cycle. Mirroring the academic literature (see section 3.2.2), participants did mention people cycling in response to economic necessity, but focused on people they described as having *chosen* to cycle.

In Exercise 1, focus group participants were asked to describe stereotypes associated with cycling in general. Participants described cycling as a primarily male activity, associated with people who had environmental concerns, and also associated with risk. These three themes are all present in focus group data and are described in a little more detail below.

First, and in line with the literature reviewed in section 3.2.1, cycling was seen as a primarily male activity. This gender imbalance was rarely explicitly noted, instead most participants, when describing cyclists, simply described males. Stephen R (FG3) stated the gender imbalance more explicitly than most, when describing pack cycling he said “somehow it’s a bloke thing”.

Second, cyclists were commonly described as being motivated to cycle by environmental concerns. Seven out of eight groups mentioned a connection between environmental concerns and cycling, but few described this in any detail. For example, in FG2 the mention of environmental concerns was brief, and was situated within a wider discussion of cyclists and fitness:

Tanya: Also fitness freaks.

Stephen M: I think there are some fitness freaks. …

Brendan: Now, I'll also go down a level and say they're not freaks, they're people who like general fitness. …

Stephen M: Greenie, or environmental concern for people. …

Tanya: Also, erm, healthy. Not necessarily general fitness but I think there's not many smokers who also ride bikes everywhere.

Thus we see an environmental connection with cycling mentioned by almost every group, but not described in detail, and rarely linked to any particular type of person or any other themes. In section 3.2.2, I suggested that the activity of cycling may be more commonly associated with environmentalism than are its adherents, the cyclists. This may account for participants' connection of cycling with environmental concerns, but the absence of descriptions of particular kinds of people.

Third, cycling was frequently associated with risk. Six out of eight groups mentioned some kind of risk associated with cycling, but risk was rarely discussed in detail. For example, Stephen R and Amelia (FG3) described people who hang their helmets on the handlebars rather than wearing them as "stupid" but they did not discuss the wider risk that may render helmet usage necessary. Two groups (FG1 and FG8) did have slightly more detailed discussions of risk, and both of these groups described certain behaviours as making cyclists vulnerable, including riding in the dark without lights and riding two or more abreast.

The topics of gender, environmental concerns, and danger were all regularly expressed by participants when they were discussing cycling in general. These themes were rarely discussed in detail and rarely connected to one another or to other topics. Focus group participants also mentioned some subgroups of cyclists, including school children and students (four groups), commuters (four groups), eccentrics (two groups), BMX riders (two groups), cycle tourers (two groups), mountain bikers (one group), and couriers (one group). These groups were mentioned but rarely discussed in detail during discussions of cycling in general. Much more commonly, participants gave very detailed descriptions of social meanings associated with road cycling. Participants talked about road cycling in considerable detail even before they were asked to describe the stereotypical rider of a road bike. It is to meanings associated with road cycling and road bikes that we now turn.

5.2.2 Road bicycles

In this section, I describe the social meanings associated with road cycling. Participants talked about social meanings associated with road cycling when they were asked to describe the stereotypical riders associated with images of road bikes. Importantly, participants also focused considerable attention on road cyclists when asked to describe cyclists in general.

It is unclear why social meanings associated with road cycling were the focus of so much attention when participants were discussing cycling in general. I was careful to introduce focus group exercises with language that did not prioritise certain groups (Koorey, 2007), and it seems unlikely that focus group design led to the prioritisation of social meanings associated with road cycling. It is more likely that road cyclists are a highly visible, distinct, and much stereotyped group in Christchurch, and so social meanings associated with road cyclists were easily brought to mind by participants.

Participants associated road cycling with a web of interconnected themes. Some of the most prominent themes included fitness (or a lack of it), tights or Lycra, expensive bicycles, coffee, imitation, arrogance, and rule breaking behaviour. Several of these themes have been connected before; for example, Daley and Rissel (2011, p. 214) combine Lycra, expensive bicycles, and fitness into one observation: "Descriptions of 'the lycra people' referred to weekend sports cyclists who gear up and ride expensive road bikes for fitness".

One of the most striking things about social meanings associated with road cycling is the extent to which different meanings are connected. Hilton and von Hippel (1996, p. 240) describe stereotypes as "theories about how and why certain attributes go together". Similarly, Pendry (2008, p. 72) refers to cognitive structures, or "schemas" that help us to perceive the relations between people's different attributes. How the meanings associated with road cycling fit together, and what they collectively symbolise, is more telling than the individual meanings themselves. Expensive bicycles, coffee rides, and imitation, for example, appear to be a set of characteristics that, together, are symbolic of a wealthy, middle-class, middle-aged lifestyle that includes weekend leisure cycling. As I proceed through more detailed description of these interconnected meanings, I pay some attention, not just to the meanings themselves, but to how each is connected to the others in this set and to wider cultural understandings.

Fitness

Most groups described fitness as a motivation for biking. Despite this consistency in descriptions of motivation, different groups described the fitness of individual cyclists very differently. Three groups mentioned fitness freaks, fitness fanatics, and other people who were very fit; in contrast, three groups focused on cyclists who were overweight or unfit.

Participants commonly conflated fitness and thinness. Similar conflations have been noted before (Aldred, 2013a; Freund & Martin, 2004), although emerging understandings of the relationship between physical exercise and obesity suggest that it may be possible to be fit yet overweight, or unfit yet thin (Luke & Cooper, 2013). In addition, being unfit and overweight was commonly associated with being middle-aged or older. Further, some participants associated fitness, thinness, and youth with a sense of legitimacy; fit, thin, young cyclists were accorded more respect, and unfit, overweight, older cyclists were more likely to be ridiculed.

Of the other themes associated with road cycling, fitness was most clearly linked to Lycra.

Lycra

Lycra was associated both with those cyclists who were described as fit and thin, and with those who were described as being overweight, or not of a body shape that would be attractive in Lycra. Stephen R and Amelia (FG3), in a rare discussion of female cyclists, mentioned both of these groups:

> Stephen R: And you see some young women cycling, and they're really fit and they're determined, and then you see some of the middle-aged ones who are slightly broad across the beam-
>
> Amelia: ((Laughs)) That's polite!
>
> Stephen R: -and you think they joined for fitness reasons, but you're very glad that they are wearing Lycra in which case, because there's containment.

In this exchange, we can see hints of respect for "fit" and "determined" young cyclists, compared to ridicule of less fit, middle-aged individuals who require the "containment" of Lycra. This exchange focuses on women but similar dichotomous descriptions of men in Lycra occurred; featuring both the fit, young, and determined, and those whom Carrie (FG8)—referring to unattractive body shapes—mockingly said could have worn something else to avoid the eyes of onlookers becoming "scarred".

Four groups had discussions featuring Lycra quite prominently; another group had one brief mention of Lycra. Lycra, in turn, was closely linked to the use of expensive bicycles.

Expensive bicycles

Expensive or "flash" bicycles featured in focus group discussions. Expensive bikes have, elsewhere, been described as status symbols, particularly associated with wealth and leisure (Daley & Rissel, 2011; Steinbach et al., 2011). Ed (FG1) appeared to echo status associations (and also connected expensive bikes to Lycra) when he said "I'd just say the middle-aged men, they'd like the flash bike to rock up [on], I can imagine Lycra, and the bike, and just trying to look the part".

Ed's connection of expensive bikes to middle-age mirrored descriptions of sports car drivers that assumed the ability to afford expensive vehicles was related to life stage (see section 5.1.6).

Several participants connected expensive bikes to wealth and middle class, associations that continue as we consider the social meanings associated with coffee.

Coffee

Coffee and coffee rides (leisure rides involving a stop at a café), were mentioned by four groups. Participants in FG4 most clearly drew the link between wealth, leisure, class, and coffee.

> Dena: This is the ((mocking tone)) 'I do this on a Sunday, I have all of the really cool equipment, and do not scratch my bike, coz I'm having my latte.'
>
> Andy: Yeah, coz this is a $10,000 bike.

Here, coffee (specifically a latte) was used to draw attention to a set of social characteristics, particularly a wealthy, middle-class lifestyle that involves leisure cycling at the weekends. Andy's addition to the exchange suggests that the symbolism of weekend leisure and lattes is emphasised by a link to expensive bikes.

Leisure rides involving café stops were, in turn, linked to the idea of unfit cyclists imitating serious athletes.

Imitation

Participants commonly described certain cyclists as conveying a false image of themselves by attempting to imitate serious athletes. Participants in FG8 explained:

> Margaret: It's the old men who are lamenting the passing of their youth and think they need to get fit but aren't actually doing enough to stay fit.
>
> Carrie: And they're not really like bike racers, they just wanna make themselves seem like that, you know, really hard-out into biking but-
>
> Margaret: Yeah, they go out once a week, for a Saturday morning ride.

When talking about imitation, participants balled together all of the previously discussed themes (lack of fitness, Lycra, expensive bikes, and coffee) into a representation of a group of people trying to assume an image that would not be an accurate depiction of themselves or their cycling. Some groups acknowledged the existence of genuine athletes, but athletes were the subject of much less focus group discussion (and derision) than the apparent imitations.

Arrogance

Most focus group discussions contained descriptions of cyclists being arrogant or behaving in ways that suggested their superiority over others (see also Basford et al., 2002). A common expression, used in four groups, was that cyclists feel they "own the road". A quick review of several extracts referring to owning, or hogging, the road shows how clearly this theme links back to the other themes already discussed (emphasis has been added to the following extracts to highlight links to other themes). Ed (FG1) said: "The more *expensive* the bike the more they think they own the road" and Tracy (FG5) described "*fitness freaks* who own the road". In FG7, Monkey referred to a recreational cyclist wearing *Lycra*, Bob replied with "road hogs", and Fred followed up with "*coffee* riders". In these short quotes, we see expensive bicycles, fitness, Lycra, and coffee all explicitly linked to the impression that cyclists are arrogant and feel they own the road. Focus group data seem to suggest that cyclists are perceived as being arrogant because they apparently possess a false sense of entitlement to road space, an entitlement that is associated with wealth and athleticism.

Breaking the rules

The final theme in this interconnected web is a sense that cyclists (and arrogant cyclists in particular) break road rules. Particularly common was the impression that cyclists ignore red traffic lights (see also section 3.2.3).

Most participants described rule breaking as negative, often arrogant, behaviour. In contrast, Victoria (FG1) described loving that cyclists can go through red lights in a way that car drivers cannot. Victoria agreed that cyclists break rules, but did not echo the negative evaluation of other participants. Explicit disagreements within this web of interconnected social meanings were unusual, but Victoria's perspective highlights that participants can, and did, see things differently even within such a comprehensively and consistently discussed set of social meanings as that outlined above.

To summarise this set of interconnected themes then, road cyclists were discussed in the context of fitness (or a lack of fitness), Lycra, expensive bicycles, coffee, imitation, arrogance, and rule breaking behaviour. Different focus groups discussed different combinations of these themes and focussed on different ideas. These themes all appear to be linked in widely shared social meanings associated with cyclists but may not all be present in any one description. Each of the eight focus groups mentioned at least some of these themes. Overall, road cyclists were represented as wealthy, middle-class, middle-aged people with lifestyles that include weekend leisure cycling and also with a false sense of superiority and entitlement.

5.2.3 Mountain bikes

Discussions stimulated by photographs of two basic mountain bikes demonstrated that participants considered mountain bikes to be versatile and not exclusively used for mountain biking. For example, participants in FG1 described mountain bikes as suitable for commuting to work, for cruising around the roads at weekends, for riding on off-road tracks, or for travelling through the city. As a result of their multiple possible uses, mountain bikes were associated with a wide range of groups of people. Although mountain bikes were most commonly associated with male riders, there was more acknowledgement of a gender mix of

riders than for other types of bikes. Riders were described as including children through to older people, and as dressing in a variety of different styles of clothing, including Lycra, but also baggy shorts, office wear, and hi-visibility commuting gear. Four groups mentioned a connection between mountain biking and a sense of thrill or adventure, and three groups mentioned a connection to being fit or sporty; however, these were passing references that were not discussed in detail.

Participants found it more difficult to agree on the social meanings associated with mountain bikes than with other kinds of bikes. This seemed to be a result of the diversity of possible uses and users of mountain bikes. Several groups argued about the meanings and types of riders associated with the mountain bikes in the pictures they were shown. This may indicate that social meanings associated with mountain bikers are less clear than other social meanings (and particularly those associated with road cyclists).

5.2.4 Other bicycles

Alongside road and mountain bicycles, participants were shown images of a European-style commuter bicycle and a BMX bicycle. The different focus groups largely agreed on the social meanings associated with these bicycles.

The European-style commuter bicycle was associated with women and particularly with riders of Dutch or German origin. The bicycle was also described as “old fashioned” and most likely to be ridden by older ladies or younger girls with “retro” tastes.

In contrast, BMX bicycles were strongly associated with boys or male teenagers, and occasionally with young men. BMX bicycles were considered to be leisure bikes suitable for going to skate parks and doing tricks or stunts; they were rarely considered to be a mode of transport.

5.2.5 Section summary

In summary, cyclists were usually described as having chosen to cycle, often for environmental reasons. Cyclists were most commonly described as being male, and cycling was associated with risk.

Social meanings associated with road cycling were prominent in discussions of cycling. Meanings associated with road cycling included interconnected themes around fitness, Lycra, expensive bicycles, coffee, imitation, arrogance, and rule breaking behaviour. These themes, taken together, appear to be symbolic of wealthy, middle-class, middle-aged lifestyles incorporating weekend leisure cycling and associated with imitating athleticism and with a false sense of superiority and entitlement. Social meanings associated with road cycling may feature so prominently because road cyclists are a highly visible, distinct, and much stereotyped group.

A much wider range of people was associated with mountain biking than with road biking. Mountain bikes were associated with both leisure and commuter cycling, with Lycra wearing and non-Lycra wearing cyclists, with children and adults, and with a more balanced gender mix of riders than any other type of bicycle. The European commuter-style bicycle shown to participants was associated with older ladies or young women with retro tastes, and the BMX bicycle was most strongly associated with younger males doing tricks and stunts.

5.3 Motorcycling

Several strong themes connect the different social meanings that participants associated with motorcycling. These themes cut across (and in some cases differentiate between) different styles of motorcycle; for example, rider age was a prominent theme in discussions of each motorcycle. This section is organised thematically to represent these cross-cutting themes.

Although thematic sections incorporate most of the key features of discussions of motorcycles, they do not adequately allow for discussions of scooter and moped riders. Participants sometimes did not consider scooter and moped riders to be motorcyclists, and they described these riders very differently to other users of powered two-wheelers.[31] Here, I briefly discuss some of the social meanings associated with scooters and mopeds before continuing on to provide a more detailed consideration of the broader social meanings associated with motorcycling more generally.

5.3.1 Scooters and mopeds

The main distinction between other motorcycle riders and riders of scooters and mopeds relates to gender. Mirroring Hebdige (1988), participants almost always described motorcycle riders as male, and primarily described scooter and moped riders as female. Two quotes from Stephen M (FG2) highlight the strong masculine image associated with motorcycles and the more feminine associations made with scooters. Stephen said:

> I think it's quite a strong thing … that you associate with motorbikes, that they are quite a macho thing. I suppose a woman riding a motorbike you'd think she was … quite a (.) manly, you know, … not a feminine sort of person.

He later added "I think probably scooters were seen more as a woman's motorbike type thing".

Participants also described scooters as ridden by "yuppies" or young professionals with a strong (and sometimes derided) sense of style, such as architects, bankers, accountants,

[31] My definition of motorcycles (and the definition used throughout this thesis, except where otherwise specified) includes all powered two-wheelers, but questions and comments from participants about what they should and should not talk about under the heading "motorcycles" indicated that there is a range of possible definitions of a motorcycle.

and lawyers. This links to Hebdige's (1988) discussion of the aestheticisation and effeminacy of scooters. Scooters were also commonly linked to students and young people and to a concern for the environment. Scooters and mopeds were described in ways that were quite distinct from the other kinds of powered two-wheelers discussed.

Motorcycles more generally were linked with four highly consistent themes: age and wealth; rebellion and escape; risk; and sociability, leisure, and personal appearance. Each of these themes is reviewed below.

5.3.2 Age and wealth

Age, although not a prominent theme in literature, was one of the most striking themes associated with motorcycling by focus group participants. All focus groups mentioned connections between age and the ownership of particular kinds of motorcycles. Particularly, increasing age was taken to be a proxy for increasing wealth, which was described as influencing motorcycle choices. (A similar dynamic was observed with regard to the ownership of sports cars and expensive bicycles; see sections 5.1.6 and 5.2.2).

Participants were clear that they expected people of different ages to own different kinds of motorcycles. Motorcycles such as the one shown in Figure 7 were described by participants as the bike of choice for the young; focus groups FG2 and FG6 specified that the rider of this bike was likely to be in his twenties.[32] Motorcycles such as the one shown in Figure 8 were described as being ridden by slightly older men; and motorcycles such as the one shown in Figure 9 were expected to be ridden by men aged 50 or over, and were commonly associated with retirees.

[32] As motorcycle riders were described as being almost exclusively male, the gendered language seems appropriate here.

Figure 7: A young man's motorcycle

Figure 8: A slightly older man's motorcycle

Figure 9: A retired man's motorcycle

Perhaps more interesting than this age progression itself is the way in which age appears to be a proxy for wealth. Participants explained that they associated older men with bigger, more expensive motorcycles as they expected older men to be more likely to be able to afford them. This connection between age and wealth is not a strong theme in the transport literature reviewed. However, the connection does reflect descriptions of two different kinds of motorcycle riders. Motorcycles are sometimes described as low cost alternatives to car use, but also as stylised and aestheticized symbols of middle-class distinction (Haigh, 2008; Halnon & Cohen, 2006; Jderu, 2015). Younger men and poorer people may be expected to use simpler motorcycles for the purposes of low cost transport, while older, wealthier men's use of more elaborate motorcycles can be interpreted as a symbol of distinction and wealth.

Participants described older men as having sufficient accumulated wealth to be able to buy expensive motorcycles that they would have liked, but would not have been able to afford, at a younger age. For example, Bob and Mark (FG7) described typical riders of Harley-Davidsons:

> Bob: They're the boys in the business suits and the exec cars who go on their Harleys on the weekend. …
>
> Mark: Ah they're the group that always wanted that type of bike and never been able to afford it, and when they can afford it they go out and buy one. Sort of a childhood dream.

Likewise, Margaret (FG8) described the riders of similar motorcycles as "always older because [these bikes are] not a cheap thing to have". Participants therefore linked the ideas of age, wealth, and type of motorcycle in a linear progression. Older men were also described as

being influenced by mid-life crises and as trying to relive or recapture their youths through riding motorcycles (see also Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

5.3.3 Rebellion and escape

Participants in several groups made a connection, similar to the one made in literature, between motorcycling and rebellion. For example, Darryl (FG4) described the stereotypical rider of one particular motorcycle as: "Someone that (.) likes to break the rules, rebel". There were also several indications though, of rebellion softening to notions of temporary escape.

Several groups specifically mentioned motorcycling as positively associated with seeking personal space away from responsibilities, particularly family responsibilities. A misheard comment in FG1 resulted in participants later agreeing that having a motorcycle could be both "an escape from your wife" (Horrace) and also an "escape from life" (Victoria). Both of these assertions mirror descriptions of motorcycling as "free spirited rebellion" (Austin et al., 2010, p. 952) and motorcyclists as escaping "the fetters put on them by the constraints of everyday life" (Ghurbal, 2008, p. 11).

As notions of rebellion have softened into temporary escape, they may also have become associated with older men and less clearly associated with youth. Basil (FG6) noted that motorcycling was once "a sign of rebellion in youth", but said he thought that image had largely been eroded. Part of this erosion may have resulted from temporary escape being more suited to slightly older men than were notions of rebellion, as older men may have greater family and professional responsibilities from which to escape. For example, Stephen M (FG2) connected the idea of temporarily getting away from responsibilities with a middle-aged family man:

> I thought maybe this could be someone who's got a family, and he's at least 40, and this is like his getaway thing, his particular hobby or his interest. (.) It's a sort of a weekend getaway type vehicle.

The kind of man to whom Stephen refers here may also have accumulated wealth as per expectations of a person of his age. Certainly, the motorcycling industry has been described as marketing softened notions of rebellion to "upscale consumers" (Austin et al., 2010, p. 957). What we may be starting to see here then, is a conflation of social meanings associated with the symbolic display of wealth, and of escape from responsibility. We will see further evidence of connections between age and escape below, but more work would be needed to comprehensively assess any connections that exist from rebellion and escape to age and wealth.

5.3.4 Risk

Participants commonly described motorcycling as being risky. Six of the eight groups made reference to the risks of motorcycling and, although risk was rarely a prominent feature of focus group discussions, we can draw several comparisons to some of the debates described in the literature review. Participants linked the risk of motorcycling to thrill-seeking and rebellious practices, and also to the control of risk.

Several groups described motorcyclists breaking the speed limit or having speeding convictions. When Horrace (FG1) described a friend (who had several speeding tickets) racing up the side of stationary traffic, John commented that this practice is "highly dangerous". Victoria disagreed with John's assessment, however, arguing that motorcyclists are more vigilant than car drivers. Victoria and John appeared to be rehearsing the debate (discussed in section 3.3.3) around whether the risk associated with motorcycling is a result

of dangerous riding practices, or whether it can be controlled through skill, and in this case, vigilance. Literature describes the skill perspective to be most commonly held by motorcyclists, while the risky riding perspective is more commonly espoused by non-motorcyclists. Victoria and John did not follow that pattern as both had owned motorcycles in the past but neither owned or rode a motorcycle at the time of the research.

Although risk was not a particularly prominent feature of focus group discussions, we can also find references to the appeal of thrill-seeking in a context that resembles edgework. Brendan (FG2), for example, commented that some motorcyclists "enjoy the wind on their face, open air, little bit of danger". Chris, in his later interview, also offered some support for the idea of motorcycling as edgework, both likening it to rock climbing and commenting that he motorcycled in a way that required considerable concentration and focus. Chris also associated *edgework* and *control* by likening his own riding to adventure sports, but also arguing that he had made considerable efforts to develop motorcycling skills to keep himself safe when riding.

Further, there is some evidence in focus group data that motorcycling edgework, like temporary escape, may be more associated with older rather than younger men. Brendan associated thrill-seeking with those motorcyclists experiencing a mid-life crisis, and Chris reported that having family responsibilities meant he was unlikely to be engaging in other "fun" pursuits like rock climbing. Thus again, we see age and family responsibilities contributing to how motorcyclists were perceived, and a particular importance appeared to adhere to the social meanings associated with older motorcyclists.

5.3.5 Sociability, leisure, and personal appearance

The social nature of motorcycling was a strong theme in focus groups. Motorcycling was commonly associated with significant interpersonal relationships in a way that was less common for other modes. Three prominent kinds of sociability were described by participants in relation to motorcycling:

- *Trips* or excursions with a partner or loved one (mentioned in five of the eight focus groups)
- Membership of motorcycle clubs or enthusiast groups, including tour or holiday groups (mentioned in six of the focus groups)
- Gang associations (mentioned in five of the focus groups)

The overarching sociability of motorcycling is not a strong theme in literature, but Jderu (2015) describes the *social career* of motorcyclists as they increasingly become affiliated with motorcycling groups and culture. In addition, a number of authors discuss motorcyclists in the context of gang or subcultural affiliations (Hopper & Moore, 1983; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Focus group participants gave a wider view of sociability that incorporated all three kinds of companionship listed above, alongside notions of escape and solitude.

Sociability was commonly associated with leisure, and participants in this research described motorcycling as more of a leisure activity than a utilitarian mode of transport.[33] Social relationships were described as being performed through leisure activities such as excursions with loved ones and club rides or meetings. A focus on leisure activities connects to an academic literature that also primarily considers motorcycling in its form as a leisure

[33] Whether gang activities are perceived as leisure or utilitarian practices is beyond the scope of this thesis.

pursuit (Austin et al., 2010; Hopper & Moore, 1983; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

The sociability of motorcycling was connected to the appearance of motorcyclists. There were numerous suggestions that personal appearance can be a signifier of interpersonal relationships in motorcycling groups, whether it be through gang patches, similarly long hair and beards for club members, or matching leathers for semi-retired couples on Sunday excursions. The importance and symbolism of motorcyclist appearance has been noted in other contexts. For example, Jderu (2015) argues that for some new motorcyclists in Romania, wearing protective clothing is more a sign of affiliation with the motorcycling community than it is a response to safety concerns. Similarly, Schouten and McAlexander (1995, p. 48), in their work with Harley-Davidson owners, comment on a "biker uniform" and other visual symbols of group membership.

Participants in focus groups did not always agree on the symbolic significance of particular kinds of clothing. For example, some participants clearly associated leather with gangs, while others argued that the wealthy executive may swap a business suit for leathers at the weekend (for more discussion of the social meanings associated with motorcycling leathers see Austin et al., 2010 ; Milwaukee Harley-Davidson, 2004; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Participants articulated clearly, however, a perception that personal appearance was an important part of social meanings around motorcycling and particularly around group affiliations.

5.3.6 Section summary

In summary, scooter riders were described quite differently to riders of other powered two-wheelers. Participants primarily thought of scooter riders as being female and likely to be

students or young professionals. Riders of other motorcycles were almost exclusively described as being male. Riders of different ages were expected to ride different kinds of motorcycles and age was commonly considered a proxy for wealth, with older riders being able to afford more expensive and elaborate motorcycles. There is some evidence to support claims that notions of rebellion have been gradually softening into notions of temporary escape, and participants particularly connected escape with middle-aged men. Participants also associated motorcycling with risk, and described risk in terms of thrill-seeking, edgework, and control. Motorcycling was also described as a sociable leisure pursuit incorporating performances of interpersonal relationships. Clothing and other elements of personal appearance were described as identifiers of those personal relationships.

5.4 Bus Use

Participants described stereotypical bus users in terms of two consistent and quite distinct groups: those who choose to use buses, and those who have no other transport options. Most groups began by talking about people with no (or few) other transport options, and moved on later to discussing those who choose bus use.

5.4.1 No other options

Most groups included descriptions of people who use buses because they do not have the option of driving a car. Not driving was often implicitly considered synonymous with having no transport options other than bus use. Being unable to walk and cycle was not frequently mentioned in this context. Not having access to the option of driving was described as resulting from either not being able to drive or from not having access to a car.[34]

[34] Either (or both) of these characteristics can be a choice, but in focus groups they were primarily described as constraints on transport choices.

Unable to drive

Not being able to drive was described as the result of a range of conditions. These included disability (mentioned by three groups), being drunk or intoxicated (two groups), and a revoked driver's licence (one group), (see also M. Jensen, 1999). The most commonly cited restriction to driving though, was age. Seven out of eight groups mentioned children and six mentioned the elderly. Most groups did not explicitly state why the young and old would be unable to drive but this probably relates to physical and legal requirements for driving.

No car access

Not having access to a car, or other vehicle, was also described as resulting in bus use. Not having a personal vehicle can be a choice (and Mark asserted this particularly strongly in his individual exercises) but in most focus groups, not having a vehicle was described as a result of low income or poverty. For example, Heather (FG5) described bus users as including "people that can't afford a car", and Carrie (FG8) said of bus users: "Maybe they don't have a car because they're not (.) yeah, they're lower socio-economic".

Every group except one suggested that bus users have low incomes or little wealth. This focus on low economic status mirrors the perspective presented in literature described in section 3.4.1. Focus group participants presented bus use as a low status last resort for those with no other options.

Age was described above as influencing whether someone can drive; age was also linked to whether people were expected to be able to afford a vehicle. Young people and the elderly were commonly described as likely to be on low incomes and amongst those least able to afford a car. For example, when discussing bus users, Stephen R (FG3) described people on limited incomes as including the aged. Similarly, participants in FG8 described bus users as students, school children, the elderly, and people in lower socio-economic groups.

Here, age was again used as a proxy for wealth, as it was in determining the likely users of particular cars, bicycles, and motorcycles (sections 5.1.6, 5.2.2, and 5.3.2).

Two groups referred to discount cards or free bus passes for the elderly. Senior citizens in Christchurch are entitled to free off-peak bus travel. This entitlement is not means tested and so does not necessarily imply low wealth or income. However, linking elderly people to price concessions appeared to reinforce the perceived link between age and financial capabilities (see also Andrews et al., 2012).

Bus use was described as a mode of transport of last resort for those with no other options. Dena (FG4) emphasised this by saying "buses are my last port of call". Three groups also used the term *loser cruiser* (see also Meadows, 2012; Moore, 2010). When asked to describe who would use a loser cruiser, Brendan (FG2) replied "the lame, the derelict". [35] Although somewhat tongue in cheek, this response does highlight that participants associated buses with poor and somehow incapacitated users. Participants sometimes used the term *loser cruiser* for comedy value in light-hearted focus groups, but Matt (FG4) suggested that he had also encountered the term in everyday life: "I couldn't get over the fact that when I jumped on the bus [people would say] 'oh, you're taking the 'loser cruiser'!'".

Middle-aged, middle or higher income, able bodied, working populations were sometimes explicitly excluded from stereotypical cohorts of bus users. The participants in FG8 illustrated this concept most clearly; Steph began by describing someone who might use the bus:

[35] Brendan asked me to be clear that he was describing a stereotype and not his own view.

> Steph: And then there's kind of the worker, who works the day, I suppose, a middle-aged worker, works in an office building, accountant, 9 to 5, 9 to 6. …
>
> Margaret: You see I don't, I don't, that stereotype I feel doesn't hold true for Christchurch…we drive everywhere. If you are a middle income worker you're driving, not taking the bus. …
>
> Anna: -you're not going to see some man who's in his forties-
>
> Carrie: In a suit!
>
> Anna: -you know, a lawyer, in a suit, getting on a bus!

This perspective maps very clearly to those highlighted in literature in which buses are described as a low status mode of transport used by the least powerful members of society. Although the extract above is a very striking categorisation of bus users, it is important to note that not all participants agreed, and some provided positive descriptions of people who choose to take the bus.

5.4.2 Choosing bus use

Most groups described at least some people who choose, or reasons for choosing, to take the bus. There was much less consistency in these descriptions than in those of the people who are restricted to taking the bus. In particular, however, to counter the assertion from FG8 that a lawyer in a suit would not take a bus, we can draw on an extract from FG7 in which Bob says "the other [stereotypical bus user] would be the executive commuter who wants to be able to catch up on all their paper work while on the bus". Similarly, following a discussion of bus users being "tight" or on a budget, Horrace (FG1) said: "But you see people

with suits on buses!" and Ed added "Professionals". Thus, while social meanings commonly link bus use with the poor and incapacitated, these meanings did not go unchallenged.

Reasons given for *choosing* to use buses included a concern for the environment (mentioned in four groups) and being able to use journey time to do things like read or listen to music (also four groups). Other reasons included the social nature of bus use, parking concerns, buses being easier than cars when transporting children in pushchairs or prams, and buses being quicker than cars where there are bus lanes (see also Hiscock et al., 2002; Mann & Abraham, 2006; Schwanen, 2011). Buses were also described as enabling nights out partying; intoxication was therefore described as restricting a person's ability to drive, but bus use was alternatively framed as enabling voluntary intoxication. The diversity of reasons for choosing to take the bus, and the lack of consistency across focus groups, makes it difficult to pull out consistent themes and social meanings. But it is important to note that participants talked about *choosing to take the bus* almost as frequently, and in almost as much detail as being restricted to taking the bus.

5.4.3 Section summary

In summary, there were two consistent and distinct groups of bus users in social meanings described by participants: those who choose to use buses, and those with few other options. Most groups began by talking about those people without other options and moved on to talking about those who deliberately choose to use buses. For example, Stephen R and Amelia (FG3) began their discussion of bus users by talking about school children, people on limited incomes, the aged, the intellectually disabled, and those on benefits. These are all groups whose members may be unable to drive or may not have access to a car. Stephen and Amelia then moved quickly to talking about people making a conscious choice to use the bus

for reasons of environmental and civic awareness. It is unclear whether the consistent ordering of descriptions of the *choice* and *no choice* groups of bus users is significant.

It may be that the no choice group was consistently described first because related social meanings were stronger and more prominent in participants' minds. (A similar logic was used by Kuhn and McPartland (1954), referring to Newcomb (1950), in the development of the Twenty Statements Test). Sadalla and Krull (1995) provide some support for this perspective through demonstrating that public transport use is more strongly associated with low economic status than with environmental awareness.

Several alternative possibilities exist, however, for the consistent ordering of descriptions of bus users in focus groups. First, the prominence of the no choice group could relate to my use of the term *stereotype* in introducing the focus group exercises. Participants may have associated stereotypes with prejudice, discrimination, and stigma (Aldred, 2013a; Devine, 1989; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Jussim & Rubinstein, 2012). Their perceptions of the no choice group of users may have fit more neatly with their understandings of stereotypes than did the choice group of users, leading to the no choice group being raised first. Second, the consistent ordering of social meanings may be a repercussion of the different speeds at which stereotypes are activated and suppressed (Devine, 1989). Further research would be needed to differentiate between these, and other possible reasons, for the consistency of ordering.

5.5 Walking

Participants sometimes described walking as the mode of transport that is associated with the fewest social meanings. For example, Matt (FG4) said "I don't actually think there's any real general stereotypes you could pull about pedestrians". Matt's comment aligns with

reflections that walking is often assumed to be "homogenous and largely self-evident" (Middleton, 2010, p. 576) and "socially and culturally almost invisible" (Pooley et al., 2013, p. 113).

Supporting the apparent cultural invisibility of walking, focus group participants provided few descriptions of social meanings associated with walkers. FG3 was a major exception, with participants describing diverse groups of pedestrians, walkers, and runners. They talked about women walking for fitness and gossiping at the same time, dog walkers, locals walking with shopping bags, families walking by the river, jaywalkers, homeless people, teenagers delivering circulars, and new mums walking to the park in groups and discussing parenting. Participants in other groups, however, struggled to identify social meanings associated with walking despite not having struggled with other modes of transport.

When asked to describe the stereotypical walker, Tanya (FG2) said: "Well that's everyone. Everyone has to walk somewhere sometime". Participants in several other groups agreed. Such assertions emphasise that walking was taken-for-granted as a normal and largely unremarkable practice. These assertions, probably unintentionally, gloss over differences in walking styles or purposes and also obscure the social and cultural significance of walking.

It could be argued that the near-universality of walking means that it is impossible to connect social meanings with walking. This seems unlikely, however, in the context of the number of social meanings associated with car travel. Certainly more people walk than drive,[36] but most New Zealand adults do drive, and on average New Zealanders of all ages spend considerably longer in cars (either as drivers or passengers) than they spend walking;

[36] Children and the elderly are commonly amongst those described as able to walk but not able to drive.

79% of travel time is spent in cars, while only 13% is spent walking (Ministry of Transport, 2015a).[37] Most people walk and most people use cars. Being a mode of transport that most people use does not differentiate between walking and car use sufficiently to account for the many social meanings associated with car use and the few associated with walking. Although most people drive, there are many social meanings associated with different subgroups of drivers; why then, are so few subgroups of walkers described?

5.5.1 A linking mode

Seeing walking as a linking mode may contribute to a scarcity of social meanings related to walking. Walking is sometimes seen as a way of linking other modes of transport rather than being a mode of transport in its own right. Pharoah (2003, p. 365) explains that "walking is a necessary adjunct to other modes, for example, getting to and from bus stops, stations and car parks". FG4 described this feature of walking while looking at an image of walkers in an urban environment:

> Matt: It's interesting, these guys could all be sitting in a bus line queuing to get on the bus-
>
> Andy: Yes, that's correct.
>
> Matt: -or heading down into the train. So they could actually be using their pedestrian (.) to actually go on for a commute.
>
> Dena: Walk a block and then go for another mode of transport.

[37] Note that using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and pushchairs is considered "walking" in Ministry of Transport statistics. Grouping the use of mobility aids into the category of walking may be practical from the perspective of government statistics, but it has the potential to further obscure the cultural significance of the ability to walk (Green, 2009; Oliver, 1993).

Matt: Yeah.

Darryl: Are we saying that we don't perceive this, walking, to be a means of commuting in its own right? Is that what we're saying?

Matt: I think it's limited in New Zealand (.) certainly in Christchurch post-quake I'd say.

Darryl: Yeah.

Dena: Yeah.

Four groups described walking as a linking mode of transport. As a linking mode, walking may be seen as a brief and unavoidable necessity rather than as a distinction that connects an individual to a range of social meanings. Accordingly, walking itself appears largely insignificant in the context of meanings and, although short utility walking trips are undertaken, they are "barely noticed" (Pooley et al., 2013, p. 108).

5.5.2 Short distances and norms

Almost all groups described walking as only considered suitable for very short journeys. For example, Margaret (FG8) said: "It's more for short trips, like if you're just popping out to the dairy,[38] that's [in] the street over or something like that".

Some participants considered it surprising or unusual that other people may walk longer distances. Darryl (FG4) suggested, for example, that he was surprised that a colleague would prefer to walk to work rather than accept a lift in a car.

[38] The term "dairy" is used in New Zealand to describe what might in Britain or North America be called a corner shop or convenience store.

> This person walks to work every day, and it would take this person probably a good 30 minutes to walk to work. But she's just, I don't know, I see her sometimes, I pass her sometimes, I've offered to give her a lift sometimes, but she says 'no, no, I'm fine'. I don't know, she just seems entirely comfortable walking to work. [FG4]

This mild surprise appears tied to a notion of car travel as the norm in Christchurch. Participants in five of the eight groups implied that car use is normal in Christchurch and walking is less so. Ed (FG1) emphasised the norm of car use when he said that walkers might be "people from overseas where it's not normal to have cars". Ed's comment, as well as highlighting the normalcy of car travel in Christchurch, also reinforces the argument that the near-universality of walking cannot be the cause of a lack of social meanings given the rich tapestry of social meanings surrounding car use.

Four groups mentioned that walkers might be amongst the poorer people in society, that is, perhaps they walk because they cannot afford a car. While this theme was present in focus group discussions, walkers were much less commonly associated with poverty or low socio-economic status than were bus users (see section 5.4.1).

5.5.3 Health and fitness

Finally, walkers were described as walking for health or fitness (see also Pooley et al., 2013). For example, Stephen M (FG2) highlighted the possibility of walking whole journeys for fitness reasons: "If someone was sort of choosing to walk when they perhaps could do other things, then they could have a health or (.) wanting to maintain a healthy lifestyle".

The idea of walkers as consciously engaged in healthy practices is probably the strongest theme identified from focus group discussions on walkers. This theme is not particularly strong, however, compared to themes relating to other modes of transport.

A common theme in relevant literature is that walking is often seen as a leisure activity rather than a mode of transport (Dickinson et al., 2009; Green, 2009; Pooley, 2009; Pooley et al., 2013). Few participants in focus groups commented on walking as a leisure activity. This is likely to be a result of the way in which the focus group exercises were set up; in particular, the sequential discussion of different modes of transport is likely to have led participants away from thinking about walking for leisure in environments like forests, mountains, and beaches. As this project focuses on urban transport, the exclusion of these kinds of leisure walking is not particularly problematic. Some participants did later talk about their own relationships to both leisure and transport walking; this is covered in the next chapter.

5.5.4 Section summary

The clearest result from detailed analysis of focus group discussions of walking is that there are very few social meanings associated with walkers. This may be, at least in part, a result of walking being characterised primarily as a linking mode of transport. The way in which walking was often described as a short distance, unavoidable transport activity may also contribute to the apparent lack of shared or common social meanings around walking. Some participants suggested that walking more than necessary might be surprising, or might be done by people from countries where walking is more normal. The strongest social meaning identified is that walkers are people who are consciously engaged in healthy practices, but this meaning was not particularly strong or prevalent in the focus group data. The next chapter considers whether, and how, this lack of social meanings influences walking practices.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed the first research goal of this project: to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch. It has discussed the social meanings that focus group participants associated with five different modes of transport. It has covered meanings associated with cars and driving, and particularly those linked to Asian drivers, boy racers, European vehicles, SUVs and larger vehicles, small city cars, sports cars, and older vehicles. It has also covered social meanings associated with cycling in general, as well as some of those specifically associated with road bicycles, mountain bikes, European-style commuter bicycles, and BMX bicycles. The section on motorcycling covered social meanings associated with scooters, before going on to discuss prominent themes in social meanings associated with motorcycling more generally. These themes included age and wealth; rebellion and escape; risk; and sociability, leisure, and personal appearance. Next, the chapter reviewed social meanings that divide bus users into two discrete groups, those who choose bus use, and those with no other options. Finally, the walking section highlighted that there are few widely shared social meanings associated with walking, but looked in more detail at walking as a linking mode, at short distance walking and norms, and at health and fitness as a motivation for walking.

This chapter is intended to serve as a foundation for the subsequent task of investigating the influences that social meanings may have on transport practices. It is to the influences of social meanings that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Results—The Influences of Social Meanings

In the last chapter, I detailed a wide selection of transport-related social meanings, from the European car to the nana driver, the latte sipping cyclist to the loser cruiser, and from the motorcyclist trying to escape the mundane routines of everyday life to the health conscious walker. This chapter moves forward by asking what influence these social meanings have on everyday transport practices. As such, the chapter begins to address the second research goal.

This chapter relies primarily on data from participant diaries and interviews, along with the occasional use of data from focus groups where relevant. I continue to refer to participants by their research names and to use focus group numbers for comments made during focus groups. For RQD entries, I note the day on which the entry was made, "RQD6" indicates an entry made on the sixth day of a participant's diary. Quotes not given a focus group or RQD number are taken from participant interviews.

In terms of structure, I largely continue the mode-based approach of the last chapter; for each mode, I consider participant responses to some of the meanings most commonly described as influential. Before proceeding to the mode-based approach, however, I briefly make some overarching comments on the influences of social meanings.

6.1 Influences of Social Meanings

In this section, I give an overview of some of the types of influences on their transport practices that participants recognised, the timescales over which these influences operated, and the desirability of association with different social meanings.

6.1.1 Types of influences

Participants commonly described social meanings having three different types of influences on their transport practices. They described social meanings as influencing their *mode choices, vehicle choices*, and *travel performances*.[39] The next paragraphs explain these types of influences in a little more detail.

Participants described a range of social meanings influencing their transport *mode choices*. Amelia, for example, was encouraged to cycle, rather than drive, by social meanings associated with fitness and environmentalism. She described feeling and thinking that cycling put her "on the moral high ground" (RQD2). Similarly, Sunny described feeling that driving, rather than motorcycling, to client meetings was more likely to associate her with a professional image. Participants associated different transport modes with different social meanings, and these social meanings attracted participants to some modes and deterred them from others.

Participants also described social meanings influencing their *vehicle choices*. Examples include Margaret refusing to buy a car that she though would lead others to connect her with an "old lady stereotype" (RQD4), Stephen R choosing a car that he felt was sufficiently common as to not connect him to stereotypes, and Heather choosing a car she

[39] I acknowledge that the terms *mode choices* and *vehicle choices* may be problematic. First, *choice* implies the availability of alternatives, but it is clear that not everyone has a mode or vehicle choice in every context. Second, what is considered to be a choice is subjective. Some participants said that having to be respectably dressed at work ruled out cycle commuting; others considered cycling to be compatible with a respectable appearance, and so considered themselves able to *choose* to cycle. Third, *choice* implies conscious decision-making and so could be perceived as undermining the role of any non-conscious influences on practices, such as habit or habitus. I use the term *choice* here in line with other work on mode choices and because it seems more intuitively comprehensible than alternatives like *mode practices* and *vehicle practices*. In mitigation of the concerns raised here, I discuss many factors that influenced transport practices, whether or not they would be consistently described as choices.

described as having a "fun" image. Most commonly, social meanings influenced participants' choices between different kinds of cars. Occasionally participants described social meanings influencing choices between different kinds of motorcycles and bicycles.

Some participants also indicated that social meanings influenced their *travel performances*. The term *performance* is used broadly in line with Shove et al.'s definition of performance as "the immediacy of doing" (2012, p. 7); thus when I refer to performances of travel, I am concerned with the influences of social meanings on how travel is done or enacted.[40] Performances of travel include how a participant interacts with other road users. For example, Matt (FG4) explained that his awareness of negative stereotypes of cyclists made him "overtly courteous on the road" while cycling. Likewise, Bob said that he was less likely to let boy racer cars into queues of traffic compared to other vehicles.

Participants performed travel while actually travelling, but also while associated with travel. For example, a cyclist or motorcyclist remains associated with their mode of travel when not travelling if they are carrying a helmet (Aldred, 2013a). In my research, Brendan described being sure to take off his cycling helmet and hi-visibility clothing if he was going into a shop, so as to avoid being seen as "one of those cycling weirdos". Here, we could say that Brendan performed *not* being a cyclist so as to avoid association with negative social meanings.

[40] Use of the term "performance" also reflects several of the underlying principles of this research, including recognition of fluid, contingent, and multiply determined practices (Latham, 2003), people's multiple roles and appearances while travelling (Murtagh et al., 2012a; Pooley, 2009), and the relation of discursive realms to the physical, embodied, and emotional act of travelling (Richardson, 2013).

6.1.2 Timescale of influences

Participants were clear that the influences of social meanings range from long lasting to fleeting. For example, social meanings might influence participants' vehicle choices over their entire lifetimes: Andy was adamant that he would "never, as in never ever, own a Suzuki Swift" (because he associated them with old people). In contrast, social meanings might influence a single vehicle purchase. Sunny, for example, described a recent car purchase as motivated by a need to convey a professional image in a way that previous purchases had not been. Alternatively, social meanings might influence a choice between two different vehicles for a single trip. Dena said:

> We've been to a couple of places because we are getting married, and I said 'let's take the Lancer, let's not take the Audi', because we could just see the fact that someone's going to go 'ch-ching, ch-ching, ch-ching' [when the wealthy Audi owner arrives].

Similarly, influences on mode choices and travel performances related variously to practices that participants maintained over time as well as to to one-off incidents.

Considering the timescales over which social meanings have influence reemphasises the importance of variability and context in transport practices. Social meanings can have different influences on transport practices in different contexts and over different time frames. Further, people cannot be unproblematically divided into, for example, drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians; rather most participants have multiple transport affiliations that are active in different contexts.

6.1.3 Desirability of association with meanings

Participants' interpretations of social meanings were diverse. Often, participants agreed on the existence of a social meaning, but disagreed on its desirability (see also Daley

& Rissel, 2011; Hiscock et al., 2002; Kusenbach, 2003). For example, Tanya disliked the idea of being thought of as an environmental "greenie" while Sunny quite liked the same association. Both agreed that a greenie is someone with a concern for the environment, but they disagreed on whether or not it was desirable to be one. Similarly, Dena and Tracy agreed that European vehicles were associated with wealth, but where Dena indicated that having an Audi made her feel less "uncool", Tracy was embarrassed to drive an Audi because she felt it associated her with "bloody lawyers and all sorts of nobs". The differences in participant interpretations of the desirability of meanings have important consequences. Particularly, in many cases it is possible to present a consistent picture of social meanings, but not possible to consistently describe the influences of those meanings as they differed from participant to participant.

When participants talked about the influences of social meanings they primarily talked about influences on mode choices, vehicle choices, and travel performances. In the remainder of this chapter, I detail some of the influences that participants described social meanings having on their transport practices. I comment on the timescale of influences and on the desirability of particular associations.

6.2 Driving

This section considers how specific social meanings influenced participants' driving practices. The section begins with an exploration of the influences of social meanings, and particularly social norms, on driving as a mode choice. It then goes on to consider several of the different vehicle types featured in the descriptions of widely shared social meanings in section 5.1.

Participants' transport mode choices were strongly influenced by social norms, and driving is a major social norm in Christchurch. Giddens (1976, p. 108) explains that norms are sometimes considered as primarily "constraining" action, but that they also "enable" it. Participants primarily described norms as a barrier to adopting other (non-car) modes of transport, but norms also tacitly encouraged and enabled driving. Participants claimed that it was easier to use a certain mode of transport when that was a normal thing to do. As Basil explained, in Christchurch driving is a normal thing to do: "It's just where we are as a society now, [driving] is how we travel". Margaret was also explicit about how normal owning a car was amongst her friends and family:

> I don't think I have a single friend who doesn't own a car (.) oh, no, I lie, I've got my flatmate, she does not own a car… But other than that, we all own cars.

Stephen M demonstrated that ridicule from others may be one of the repercussions of travelling in a way that is not considered normal. He said his wife felt a little intimidated by the car culture at her place of work, explaining that:

> I think they've got someone who comes on a bike, she's a Japanese lady I think, but she has got a car now I think. And, er, I think they joke about it and things like that at her work.

Some participants described not minding the mild teasing they got from others when they made different travel choices to those that would be considered normal. For example, Ross laughed heartily as he described a client saying it was "bloody hopeless" asking him about cars because he always arrived by bicycle, and added "I cracked up at that". Other participants were less dismissive of the teasing or unspoken perceptions that were associated

with not driving or not having a car. Tanya, for example, imagined there would be stigma in people thinking she did not know how to drive, and added that if someone did not drive people wondered whether there was something "wrong with them". This reflection very closely mirrors one made by one of Hiscock et al.'s (2002) research participants in Scotland.

Green et al. (2012) argue that a previously well accepted norm of driving in London has been fractured by emergent discourses of moral citizenship. They describe driving as "the new smoking" and claim that "rather than being a default choice, car travel was universally described as not only dysfunctional but as inherently morally dubious" (Green et al., 2012, p. 277). This emerging notoriety of car travel is described as being a response to its environmental consequences and its failure to facilitate healthy travel by knowledgeable city dwellers. Traces of this discourse were few and far between in early participants' individual exercises in this research in Christchurch (as they seem to also have been in the London-based cohorts of Barker's (2014) study). Several participants did talk about environmental and health concerns playing a minor role in transport practices, but few considered these to be major influences. A discourse of driving as morally dubious was almost completely absent. To ensure that an important emerging feature of social meanings around transport in Christchurch was not being accidentally missed from the study, I explicitly described Green et al.'s findings to five later participants and asked if they had experienced anything similar. Each of these participants said that driving in Christchurch was not considered morally dubious and there was no social pressure to curtail driving practices. In fact, Anna described the opposite situation: "I think if anything [there's pressure] to drive". It seems likely that the pressure to which Anna was referring stemmed from the same kinds of teasing, joking, and stigma described by Stephen M, Ross, and Tanya. The norm of driving appears to be intact

and to be encouraging driving as a mode choice in Christchurch, at least for the majority of participants engaged in this research.

I have argued that social meanings most commonly adhere to subgroups of drivers rather than to all drivers. There is, however, some evidence that drivers are sometimes negatively stereotyped by users of other transport modes (particularly cyclists and motorcyclists). Bellaby and Lawrenson (2001) suggest that motorcyclists often stereotype drivers as inattentive, and in my research Chris went a little further when he argued that motorcyclists have to assume that "everyone's trying to kill [them]". Likewise, online comments on media articles suggest that a similar stereotype exists in Christchurch with regard to drivers being aggressive or inattentive towards cyclists (see for example online comments associated with Utting, 2010a; Utting, 2010b). In these stereotypes, identities are commonly constructed as essentially singular—that is, a motorcyclist is *just* a motorcyclist, rather than someone who rides a motorcycle, but probably also drives a car, walks, and maybe travels in other ways as well (Aldred, 2013a).

Stereotypes of drivers most commonly seem to be raised when a person's identity as a user of a minority mode of transport is salient, that is when a person is using, or talking about using a minority mode (see also Basford et al., 2002). For example, a person who both drives and cycles is more likely to stereotype drivers when they are talking about themselves as a cyclist than when they are talking about themselves as a driver. Stereotypes of drivers also seem to be most commonly raised when the minority identity or mode is seen to be competing with, or threatened by, car use (see also Murtagh et al., 2012b).

In my research, a few negative stereotypes of drivers were raised but these were not particularly common or strongly expressed within an overall context of the social meanings

associated with driving and car use. Indeed, they were significantly overshadowed by social norms and by the social meanings associated with different vehicles. This may be partly because the RQD exercise encouraged participants to consider their varied and context dependent transport practices over a week—thus emphasising the multiplicity of transport identities to participants, most of whom used several modes of transport. Finding out about negative driver stereotypes might actually be facilitated by using methods that intentionally promote the salience of singular, rather than multiple, transport identities.[41] Negative driver stereotypes may warrant further research with particular regard to road user interactions and conflict, but participants did not describe these stereotypes as having substantial influences on their practices.

Participants referred to a selection of meanings associated with different vehicles as they discussed their own cars and driving experiences. Most participants referred to at least some of the social meanings that were described in section 5.1; often they compared and contrasted different meanings while talking about their own driving performances and vehicles. In the interests of brevity, I have selected the social meanings most relevant to my research participants for further discussion here; these are older vehicles, European vehicles, and small city cars.

6.2.1 Older vehicles

Sixteen participants talked about the meanings associated with old, cheap, or battered cars.[42] These participants exhibited a range of different responses to older vehicles. Some

[41] Any method that encouraged participants to focus exclusively on their use of one mode of transport might achieve this.

[42] Hereafter, the term *older cars* is used as shorthand for old, cheap, and battered cars, all of which were associated with broadly similar meanings.

participants expressed some discomfort with the idea of driving older cars. For example, in response to a question about cars he would not like to drive, Basil said:

> The worst possible car? (.) Old, battered, unkempt…it can even be a nice-ish car but if it's got all those (.) defects it speaks volumes, it says several things about its owner; whether true or not, it's the perception that it conveys about its owner…I suppose my ego couldn't stand it really ((laughs)).

Basil did go on to say his ego probably could cope, but he would not like to have to drive such a vehicle. Similarly, Stephen R said that he would not like to be stereotyped as being in the "economic underclass". Victoria commented that she was very poor for a time and drove this kind of vehicle; she reported feeling better about now having a car that was "respectable enough". Each of these participants, in line with focus group discussions, suggested that driving an older vehicle would be a matter of necessity; they said that if a choice was available they would choose a different car.

Where choosing a newer vehicle had not been an option, some participants reported adjusting their travel performances to limit their association with the negative social meanings associated with older vehicles. Sunny used to park her older car out of sight of clients, for example, and Tracy used to park hers with the undented side facing the footpath so the dented side was less visible.

Several participants also noted that they thought drivers of other cars adjusted their own travel performances in the vicinity of an older car. Bob reported that other drivers were quicker to overtake when he was driving the older of his household's cars because of an expectation that the vehicle would be slow. Similarly, Darryl and Ross both commented that

other road users avoided battered cars for fear their owners might not take sufficient care around other vehicles. Darryl declared that he systematically avoided battered cars himself, especially when choosing which vehicles to park next to in car parks. Ross reported that other drivers avoided close proximity to his own (scratched) car.

Although some participants expressed discomfort around driving older cars, others were largely content to do so. Stephen M said he was happy with his older car, and attributed this partly to working with, and carpooling with, people who also have older cars, and so to not feeling out of place. Bob reported that he was really comfortable with his "old red rocket" (RQD2) that had looked after him for "years and years and years and years". Mann and Abraham (2006) similarly encountered several participants who valued older cars. They argue that older cars are valued both from an environmental perspective, and as a rejection of image as a reason for driving. Older cars then, although commonly associated by participants with necessity, can be associated with positive social meanings, including membership of a certain social group, environmental responsibility, and a rejection of superficial image motivations.

Adding a further level of complexity to responses around older cars, two participants reported feeling uncomfortable about *not* driving old and battered cars. Both of these participants were students, living at home with their parents and driving family vehicles, Anna explained:

> Sometimes it feels weird driving and parking in the Uni carpark in that car because I feel like other people look at me and think that I'm meant to be a student who has no money, I shouldn't have a car like that. (RQD 1)

This further suggests that it is not necessarily the case for participants that a nicer car is always preferable. Through her diary, Margaret, a young professional, described her ideal progression from her first car ("pretty old but it was all still in pretty good nick" (RQD4)), through to a car suitable for a young professional ("not like anything real flash…but something that's (.) nicer" (RQD 4)), and on, if she does well in her career, to cars appropriate for rich people (particularly European ones). This is an excellent illustration of a progression or "car career" to which several participants alluded and which has been briefly mentioned in academic literature (Mann & Abraham, 2006, p. 169; see also Ellis, 1989).

Often cars, especially new and expensive ones, are described as being symbols of status and success (see section 3.1.4). The usually rather singular view of status described in association with cars perhaps fails to take account of the way that status intersects with other social meanings, for example, those relating to age and independence. Particularly for the younger participants in this research, having a car that they had purchased themselves (and especially without parental help) was perceived to be a symbol of adulthood, independence, and accomplishment. For a car to effectively convey these meanings, it had to look like it could be within a young person's reach. Margaret made this point particularly effectively:

> Another thing I was thinking about with the rich car stereotype, just like why I don't want to drive one now, like you know a European kind of car, is coz I don't want people to think that my parents paid for my car. I want people to (.) like, I can stand on my own two feet and (.) that's my car and I bought it with my own money kind of thing. (RQD7)

Focus group participants described European cars as being associated with wealth and profession-based status (see section 5.1.3). But at the time of the research exercises, Margaret

considered that owning a European car could be a threat to her status by casting doubt on her financial independence. For Margaret, a cheaper car appeared to carry a more valued kind of status. Anna, Carrie, and Tanya all expressed similar points about independence and adult accomplishment; to them it seemed particularly important to have bought their own cars. These participants were all young females; unfortunately the males who completed the individual exercises were a little older so it was unclear whether there was a gender difference here or whether young males might report the same feelings. Waitt et al. (2015), in research conducted in Wollongong, Australia, quote a woman in her thirties describing her pride in having bought her own car, suggesting that a sense of accomplishment may be important to a wider demographic group. Further research could investigate this theme and its demographic linkages more closely.

In summary, older cars feature in participants' reports of their own driving practices, in varied ways. Some participants reported being happy driving older cars, while others preferred to avoid the negative social meanings associated with such vehicles. Participants avoided association with these negative social meanings, either through vehicle choices or through travel performances that distanced them from those meanings. That said, some younger participants actually preferred to have older cars to reduce the chances of other people doubting their independence.

6.2.2 European vehicles

Focus group participants described European vehicles as associated with wealth and profession-based status. European vehicles, like older cars, were viewed in quite different ways by different participants, and this had different implications for participants' vehicle choices and travel performances.

In terms of vehicle choices, there was a division between those who owned or aspired to own European vehicles, and those who rejected such cars as being snobby and unnecessary. The group of people that described European vehicles in positive terms was larger than the group that did not, especially if we disregard those young people who felt that an expensive vehicle was inappropriate to their current, but perhaps not future, circumstances.

One view of the desirability of European vehicles connected very strongly to the sense of independence and accomplishment that young people reported in buying their first, or second car. Darryl described the independence he felt, when he chose to forego a company vehicle and buy his own instead. He said:

> People associate [the car I drive now] with someone that has (.) choices and has made a choice… For me, making that decision to forego the company vehicle and do my own thing, was not financially the best option, but it was very satisfying to me because it meant that I was making a personal decision to do that, rather than being, kind of controlled by, you know, something else.

Darryl talked about having the means to make his own choices, and he described his vehicle as communicating to others his ability to make choices. This discourse resonates with Margaret's assertion that her car should communicate her ability to stand on her own two feet. Similarly, Tracy (FG5) described her husband's vehicle as a "look at me" car that is a symbol of his pride in having escaped the conditions of his upbringing.

Although these comments link to notions of cars as status symbols, as commonly referenced in literature (see section 3.1.4), they provide more clues about why status is

important. For my research participants, wealth and professional success seemed to be important primarily because of what these attributes said about personal achievements. This extends the idea that status has moved from a primarily hereditary condition, to one based significantly on individual accomplishment. Even where there was a range of different responses to social meanings associated with particular vehicles (such as whether or not European vehicles are aspirational) there was some consistency in the sense of accomplishment that participants associated with the different vehicles they acquired through their life course. Even keeping the same vehicle running for many years, as Bob had done, may be seen as an accomplishment.

Several participants described experiential factors as reasons for choosing European vehicles. Experiential factors were largely related to the perceived quality of the vehicles and to the pleasant driving experience; several European vehicle owners even said that they did not mind getting stuck in traffic because the experience of driving their vehicles was so pleasurable. This experiential element of driving appears connected to the social meanings associated with European vehicles and particularly with occupying an elevated position in a social hierarchy. Both Darryl and Basil appeared to struggle to articulate a distinction between the embodied feeling of driving a quality vehicle and the hierarchical meanings that it represented:

> Darryl: There's something about driving a nice car that makes you feel, I don't know, I wouldn't say I feel, snobby, but it's just such a pleasure to drive. (RQD2)

> Basil: It's just more comfortable on the road. So you're driving along, and you feel like you're gliding along, and it sort of gives you that sort of, I don't know, I wouldn't call it a sense of superiority, but it's certainly an air of satisfaction.

The interconnection of embodied feelings and hierarchical meanings, such that participants struggled to separate them out, re-emphasises the complexity of transport practices and how difficult it can be to try to isolate different influences on them. Pow (2000) and Spinney (2007) also emphasise that a shortage of appropriate vocabulary can make describing embodied sensations a challenging endeavour. It is, however, clear from these reports that the meanings associated with European vehicles, enmeshed with the embodied feeling of driving European vehicles, influenced vehicle choices for some participants.

Beyond vehicle choices, several participants commented that social meanings associated with European vehicles influenced their own or other people's performances of driving. Performances were described as being influenced by interpretations of European vehicles as aspirational and high quality. For example, Basil claimed that, when giving way, drivers tend to treat those in European cars more favourably. This mirrors findings by Doob and Gross (1968, p. 215) that high status cars are "honked at" less frequently than lower status vehicles. However, Basil went on to add that some drivers may alternatively treat the owners of European vehicles with spite and jealousy. Backing up this later claim, Darryl noted his concern that negative perceptions of his European vehicle may put him and his wife at risk. Daryl said this concern caused him to consciously drive calmly and conservatively to prevent altercations from occurring. Both interpretations of social meanings associated with European vehicles—the aspirational and the snobbish—were described as influencing driving performances.

In summary, European vehicles were associated with wealth and success, but also with snobbery and arrogance. The meanings around European vehicles influenced some participants in their vehicle choices, and participants reported that the positive meanings were

more influential in this respect than the negative ones. Demonstrating personal independence and accomplishment appeared to be a significant motivation for purchasing a European vehicle. The meanings around European vehicles were also connected to embodied feelings of driving pleasure. Further, driving performances were influenced by social meanings, including through giving way to nicer vehicles and avoiding incidents for fear of reprisals.

6.2.3 Small city cars

In section 5.1.5, I described a set of gendered meanings associated with small city cars. These cars were described as being stereotypically driven by women, particularly older women (or "nanas"), and were described as being "shopping trolleys". Male and female participants' responses to these meanings were quite different. The female participants in the research generally connected themselves relatively happily to these meanings (even those that they did not match demographically, such as a young woman being described as a nana). These participants described loving their vehicles even if those vehicles were sometimes described pejoratively by others. Lisa, who was in her early thirties, described a previous car:

> Lisa: Oh well I had a nana car. It was a four door Starlet, Toyota Starlet. I got called that, a nana. … Coz I was just a granny…it was only a small car, it was perfect for someone like myself. …
>
> Helen: Did [being called a nana] bother you?
>
> Lisa: Oh, not really, not really. I loved that car; I had it for seven and a half years. It was perfect.

Berger (1986) argues that a stereotype that women had low levels of mechanical and driving competence contributed, historically, to their association with small, simple cars.

Although Berger does not suggest the same association to be true for contemporary women, Waitt et al. (2015) has noted that Australian women sometimes think they lack the capacity to perform vehicle maintenance tasks. Issues around gender and competency are striking in discussions of small cars in this research. For example, Tanya explained that other people did not expect her to be driving a manual car because women are perceived as thinking driving a manual is "too much hassle" and driving an automatic is much easier. She continued:

> There's been a few guys who've said that they're quite impressed that I drive a manual, which, I don't know, I suppose maybe manuals are seen as more masculine cars, or maybe it's something to do with them being harder to drive or something. (RQD6)

A slightly longer discussion during Lisa's interview revealed that she felt that others might doubt her level of driving competence. I asked Lisa what kind of car she would choose if she could have any car at all:

> Lisa: I think a nice big [Holden], nice red, nice shiny red car…and driving around in it I think it would be neat. I think they're fast, they're nice fast cars. …
>
> Helen: Do you think the stereotype of that car would fit with who you are?
>
> Lisa: Erm, I don't know. Probably n-, I don't know. … Maybe the car would be too fast, and I need something that's easier to drive I should say.
>
> Helen: You think that would be other people's perception?
>
> Lisa: Yeah, other people. Like family or those sorts of people, friends.

Berger (1986) also argues that as women in the US became associated with small, simple, short-range cars they often accepted that they were, naturally, not of a disposition to drive large cars. Again, there are some parallels here with the data I collected. Several of the women participants described how they felt about their small cars. For example, Tanya said:

> I'd say [my car] definitely is a girl's car. And I don't mind being associated with that stereotype because, well I am a girl, and I mean what would I do with a huge chrome-wheeled, disgusting, big, fuel guzzling thing? I mean I don't need it really, I just need a car for me. And I don't really care about horse-power or anything like that, I mean it's just a town run around. (RQD6)

Tanya was one of several female participants who described themselves as not needing a large car and who specifically focused on their need for a small car for local trips. Several of the male participants did describe the virtues of small cars, and several of the female participants did drive larger cars, but women appeared to more frequently take-for-granted that a large car was not suited to them or their (predominantly local) needs.

The data I have collected suggest (although are insufficient to allow me to comprehensively demonstrate) that women's use of small city cars in Christchurch may be associated with some very similar social meanings to those that Berger (1986) identified as being in existence in North America in the early twentieth century (particularly that women are perceived as having low levels of driving skill and are most suited to small city cars). I find this to be a startling result, and one that warrants further research.[43]

[43] Some authors have suggested that gender differences in car use may be a function of gender differences in environmental attitudes (Schwanen, 2011); there was no evidence of significant differences in environmental attitudes between my male and female participants.

In contrast to female participants, the male participants in my research often rejected any connections between themselves and the meanings associated with driving small city cars, including the gendered meanings, age implications, and associated driving behaviours. Brendan described the Toyota Tiara that he drove as "not the most manliest of cars" and also as not his car of choice (RQD3). Andy went one step further and said that he would "never ever, own a Suzuki Swift" because he perceived them to be a vehicle for "octogenarians". Similarly, discussing a particular small, pink city car Andy said:

> I am the generation where pink is definitely not masculine…pink was just, for guys…you were gay! … I'm not secure enough in myself that I really could feel comfortable [driving] a pink car, and pull it off.

Ross, similarly distanced himself from the social meanings associated with small city cars by asserting "I'm not a nana driver" and going on to discuss his preferred driving speed, which was slightly above the speed limit (RQD1).

Responses to the social meanings around small city cars were not uniformly split along gender lines. For example, Margaret, unlike some of the other female participants, described her refusal to buy a car that she thought others strongly associated with old ladies. Also breaking with a rigid gender distinction, Amelia (female) and Matt (male) described social meanings associated with their city cars and both simply stated that the meanings did not fit them. There was, however, a clear spectrum of responses to small city cars with women liking these cars, and choosing them, clustered towards one end, and men disliking them and rejecting them towards the other.

There were few indications that driving performances were influenced by the meanings surrounding small city cars. Andy did, however, describe other drivers expecting him to drive sedately in his small car (in the style of a nana perhaps). He suggested that other drivers tried to get ahead of him, thus implying that the social meanings associated with his car influenced the driving performances of other road users. He went on to say that those drivers would "get a rude awakening" when he did not drive sedately and "[drove] right up their backside". It is unclear whether Andy drove aggressively to intentionally counter the meanings associated with his car, but he concluded "I'm a sports car driver trapped in a Toyota body!", which certainly suggests that he did connect particular kinds of driving performances with particular vehicles.

Andy did not explicitly link gender concerns to his assertion that he was a sports car driver; however, Amelia did make a gendered link to sports cars. In FG3's discussion of an image of a sports car, she exclaimed:

> If a lady was driving it, I would think it was her husband's. Oh that's really bad, really bad, I hate that! Why can't a chick be powerful and drive that car? Ach. … The raging feminist in me is like …! ((exasperated expression))

The gendered aspect of responses to small city cars was particularly prominent, but participants did also refer to other gendered meanings associated with driving and with cars. When not associated with small city cars, and not in focus groups, gendered content was usually more subtle and less frequently raised. However, gendered content included comments on women's driving skills, gendered practices associated with couples sharing the driving when together (see also Yeung & von Hippel, 2008), and assertions regarding the kinds of cars that women are likely to have.

Driving in New Zealand is a highly gendered practice (Ministry of Transport, 2009, 2015b). We know, for example, that men in all age groups drive more than women of the same age (Ministry of Transport, 2015b). Previous research has discussed some elements of gendered driving practices (Derek Hall, 2004; Law, 2002; Schwanen, 2011; Shove et al., 2012; Urry, 2006; Waitt et al., 2015; Watson, 1996) but it seems likely that further, contemporary, research focused on gender issues could shed more light on the role of social meanings in reproducing gender differentiated driving practices.

In summary, small city cars are associated particularly with older females. Generally, the female participants in this research (regardless of age) seemed relatively happy to be associated with the social meanings associated with these kinds of cars; in contrast the male participants generally rejected association with these meanings. There is also some slight evidence that women's association with small cars may be related to a perception that women have lower levels of driving skill than men. Participants described gendered meanings as having a substantial influence on vehicle choices but relatively little influence on driver performances.

6.2.4 Section summary

This section has demonstrated that a variety of social meanings influenced participants' mode choices, vehicle choices, and driver performances. Participants described norms as encouraging driving. An emerging sense of driving as immoral—something that has been identified in London—did not exist for this group of participants. Some negative stereotypes of drivers were invoked when use of a minority mode of transport appeared threatened, but driving was generally viewed quite positively.

Participants often broadly agreed on the social meanings associated with different vehicles, but varied considerably in their responses to those meanings. Older cars were commonly associated with economic necessity and some participants reported that they would feel uncomfortable driving an older car; other participants were, however, happy to drive older cars, and some of the younger participants reported that they felt most comfortable in these cars. European vehicles were most commonly associated with positions of wealth and professional status but again, responses to these associations differed. Some participants referred to these vehicles as aspirational, and others referred to them as snobbish and undesirable. Where vehicles were used as status symbols their most important symbolic role was in demonstrating personal accomplishment. Responses to small city cars varied strongly along gender lines; most female drivers of such vehicles seemed relatively happy to be connected to the social meanings associated with their vehicles, while most male drivers rejected association with these meanings and, where they were able to, they often also rejected the vehicles themselves.

6.3 Cycling

This section considers how social meanings influence cycling practices. It particularly considers the influences of social meanings on the mode choice of cycling, on bicycle choices, and on cycling performances. Seven of the 25 participants cycled during their diary weeks; several others reported cycling at other times.

This section focuses on those social meanings identified as having the strongest influences on cycling practices. Particularly, it focuses in on three topics introduced in section 5.2: environmental concerns, risk, and a set of seven interconnected social meanings associated with road cycling. It begins though with a short review of the influences of norms

and social support, which focus groups did not describe as being important topics for cycling, but which data from individual exercises suggest are influential.

6.3.1 Norms and social support

There is some evidence to suggest that a supportive culture, or supportive norms, help to encourage cyclists to cycle; and similarly that an unsupportive culture deters cycling (see also de Geus et al., 2008). Such support (or a lack of it) can be at a whole society level, or can come from smaller, more specific groups. For example, Victoria said that she would cycle more if cycling was viewed as more normal by others in society, whereas Stephen M described his wife and one of her colleagues as feeling slightly intimidated, and potentially deterred from cycling, by an aggressively pro-car culture at their workplace. Amelia also referenced the support and camaraderie that she got from a small social group in which cycling was considered normal.

In an intriguing twist to the idea of norms supporting mode choices, three participants mentioned getting some motivation for cycling from going against norms. They particularly liked the idea of being seen as unusually tough (or not soft) if they cycled in hideous weather. In this case, participants deliberately sought difference from norms to present themselves as tough. Ross said: "People think you're mad when you bike in rain, and…that all adds to the spice to it coz, erm, you just do it…you know what I mean? And I prove that I'm not soft" (RQD6). Most participants did not share this perspective on cycling in bad weather, but for some of the participants it seemed that some motivation for cycling was derived from performing toughness (see also Halnon & Cohen, 2006).

6.3.2 Environmental concerns

Section 5.2.1 showed that focus group participants described cyclists as being motivated to cycle by environmental concerns. Although the association between cycling and

environmental concerns was commonly mentioned in focus groups, environmental concerns were rarely described by participants as significantly influencing their own choice of cycling as a transport mode. This finding mirrors an observation in relevant literature that cycling is commonly considered to be related to environmentalism but that environmental concerns may not be strong motivators for the uptake of cycling (Kingham et al., 2011; Pooley et al., 2013). Only four participants in this research described environmental concerns as influencing their choice to cycle, and for these participants environmental concerns were often secondary to other factors. For example, Amelia reported: "I'd like to call myself a bit of an environmentalist but I'd say probably I'm less of an environmentalist and just more liking the fact that I've saved money on fuel" (RQD1).

For Amelia, cycling did have the kind of high moral status that Green et al. (2012) found it to have in London; however, this remained a secondary concern for Amelia in her mode choices. For most participants, cycling did not appear to have such a high moral status, and social meanings connected to the environmental credentials of cycling had little discernible influence on mode choices.

6.3.3 Risk

Focus group participants commonly linked cycling to risk but rarely discussed this association in detail (see section 5.2.1). In their individual exercises, participants sometimes elaborated on their concerns. Of the 25 participants, 18 talked (either prompted or unprompted) about their perceptions of the risks associated with cycling. For most, their concerns focused on sharing space with motorised vehicles. Participants were concerned less about their own ability to cycle, and more about their vulnerability to the perceptions and decisions of others. Other research clearly demonstrates how the perceptions of others can influence the safety of cyclists (Aldred, 2013a; Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011;

Fincham, 2007; Fishman et al., 2012; Hiscock et al., 2002; T. Jones & Novo de Azevedo, 2013; Kingham et al., 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Rimano et al., 2015; Rissel et al., 2010; Steinbach et al., 2011). Five participants described concerns about risk as deterring them from choosing cycling as their transport mode for at least some journeys.

Four participants also described adjusting their performances of cycling to manage the perceptions of others and minimise risk. These descriptions mirror Aldred's (2013a) observations about cyclists attempting to negotiate their association with different negative and positive social meanings. The cyclists amongst my participants performed cycling in a variety of different ways, to enable them to communicate with other road users with the goal of maximising their own safety. For example, Heather said: "If I heard a truck coming I'd start to wobble so they'd give me a wide berth" (RQD3). In this way, Heather performed vulnerability to influence overtaking distances. In contrast, Matt (FG4) said he was very aware of negative stereotypes of arrogant cyclists and continued: "when I was cycling regularly [my awareness] of the way people perceived cyclists, made me overtly courteous on the road. So I went out of my way to be courteous". Where Heather performed vulnerability, Matt performed courteousness.

The New Zealand Code for Cyclists supports using performances of courtesy to improve the safety of cycling. It advises:

> Every time you ride, you have an opportunity to contribute to a cycle friendly culture. It is important to ride with courtesy and respect for all other cyclists and motorists. … Thank other road users when you can. For example, let them know you are happy they waited for you by waving, smiling, or giving them a 'thumbs up'. This will make sharing the road easier for everyone. (NZ Transport Agency, 2013)

Here, the Code explicitly encourages not just courteous cycling, but communicative performance of courteous cycling. That is, it encourages communicating with other road users (through waving, smiling, and giving a "thumbs up") to influence their future road-sharing practices.

A couple of the cyclists in my research identified some tension between communicating courtesy and cycling sufficiently assertively to assure safety. Both Brendan and Amelia talked about riding assertively and trying not to annoy or antagonise other road users (particularly in light of negative stereotypes). Amelia reported: "I've probably become more assertive, and less worried about (.) being annoying to drivers, because I just think, well, yeah, at the end of the day, it's my (.) life ((laughs))".

The way that cyclists performed cycling varied from Heather deliberately wobbling to Matt going out of his way to be courteous, and to Amelia deciding that assertiveness was more important than performing courtesy. In contrast to the literature discussed in section 3.2.4, cyclists in my research did not talk a great deal about different clothing making them feel more or less vulnerable. However, each of these participants was able to talk about the ways in which they tried to manage the perceptions of others to try to keep themselves safe while cycling.

6.3.4 Road cycling

Finally, for cycling, I consider the influences of the seven interconnected social meanings associated with road cycling that were discussed in section 5.2.2. These meanings concern fitness, Lycra, expensive bicycles, coffee, imitation, arrogance and rule breaking behaviour. Collectively this set of meanings was prominent in discussions of the influences of

social meanings on cycling practices; participants' responses to these meanings are described below.

Fitness and fatness

In section 5.2.1, I explained that focus group participants described cyclists as being motivated by a desire for fitness. Similarly, in the individual exercises, participants commonly cited fitness as a motivation for their own cycling. Over half of the participants commented on the potential (whether realised or not) for them to stay fit and get exercise through cycling.

Focus group participants commonly described two groups of cyclists: the unfit and overweight, and the extremely fit and athletic. These two extreme groups were less present in individual exercises, but fitness as a motivation for cycling remained a strong theme. Participants most commonly linked themselves to a general, but not extreme, level of physical fitness.

Several participants indicated that remaining fit was important to them because of the negative social meanings associated with obesity. Participants continued to conflate fitness and body shape in ways that were noted in section 5.2.2. Here, some participants also referred to wider associations between body shape and general social and professional competence (see also Aldred, 2013a; Freund & Martin, 2004). Both Ross and Amelia, for example, focused on obesity in their own professions and especially suggested that fatness might denote diminished professional capabilities. Amelia, who worked in the health sector, described the irony of obese health workers giving other people health advice, and Ross, an accountant, described most accountants as being "fat and useless". Both participants clearly indicated that their fitness was important to them, and that social meanings associated with

body shape influenced their transport mode choices. If recent assertions that exercise has a minimal impact on body shape (Luke & Cooper, 2013) continue to gain traction, it will be fascinating to observe any resulting evolutions in the social meanings that connect fitness, body shape, and competence.

Green et al. (2012) describe healthy, environmentally friendly travel as being considered morally superior to car travel. The results of this research are more mixed. There is little evidence from my participants that they considered driving to be morally dubious (see section 6.2). There is also little evidence that they considered cycling to have a high moral status because of its environmental credentials (see section 6.3.2). However, this section has demonstrated that a small number of participants did associate cycling with morally superior fitness.

The health promoting aspect of cycling was the only one of the seven interconnected meanings associated with road cycling to be described in almost exclusively positive terms. More commonly the meanings associated with road cycling were described as being negative and unappealing.

Lycra, coffee, imitation, and arrogance

Meanings around Lycra, coffee, imitation, and arrogance were evident when participants talked about cycling, and were usually not described in favourable terms. Participants did not commonly claim these meanings to be major influences on transport mode choices although some participants did rate them as unappealing (cf. Aldred, 2013a; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Goodman et al., 2014). For example when I asked Dena (who said she last owned a bicycle in about 1993) whether anything about riding a bicycle appealed to her

she replied: “I have no problem with a helmet for example…Lycra, not so much ((mocking tone and laughs)), [and] there’s only so many espressos you can have”.

Dena said that biking was unappealing for primarily instrumental reasons, including the weight of carrying her laptop to work, and the unpleasantness of cycling in bad weather. She did, however, demonstrate here that she also did not find associations with coffee and Lycra to be attractive. Similarly, both Bob (who did cycle regularly) and Tracy (who did not) said that they would not like to be associated with meanings connected to arrogance and Lycra. Bob said:

> The arrogance is really when they’re in a bunch and they’re riding you know, two or three abreast, invariably road cyclists more than mountain bikers…and they all just happen to be wearing Lycra…And yeah, I would probably take unkindly to that if I was associated with that.

Neither Bob nor Tracy claimed to be influenced by these meanings in terms of their transport mode choices, but both agreed that they would prefer not to be associated with this set of meanings. Only two participants described being deterred from cycling, in at least some situations, by the negative social meanings associated with Lycra, coffee, imitation, or arrogance. Some participants did, though, describe this set of meanings as influencing their performances of cycling. Particularly, those cyclists who performed courteous cycling to minimise risk commonly referenced perceptions that cyclists were arrogant.

Breaking the rules

Performances of cycling were also connected to participants’ relationships to social meanings around rule breaking behaviour. Attitudes to rule breaking behaviour were mixed. Some participants connected rule breaking with arrogance and negative social meanings, and

a number of cyclists said they did not like being associated with rule breaking behaviour. Other cyclists, however, appeared to see rule breaking as an appealing feature of cycling. For example, Brendan explained:

> Breaking the road rules is part of the fun, being able to get away with not stopping at stop signs and leaving intersections early before the green knowing there is little chance the police will be concerned. (Supplementary e-mail after completion of the individual exercises)

Brendan's tolerance for breaking road rules may relate to a general resistance (by most participants, regardless of transport mode) to being delayed or held up while travelling. A similar resistance to waiting has been noted elsewhere (Middleton, 2010; Root et al., 1996; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). Cyclists, as Brendan suggested, may just be more likely than other road users to get away with breaking the rules to avoid delays. However, some cyclists (including Brendan) expressed a relish for breaking the rules that suggests more than the avoidance of delays. Amelia said: "I'd probably feel alright with the fact that [people] see me ignoring road rules (.) because I kind of like to ignore them sometimes, and not be a stickler for the rules all the time" (RQD7).

Both Brendan and Amelia described rule breaking behaviour as minor acts of rebellion with few or no negative consequences. As such, they portrayed rule breaking as an appealing aspect of cycling (see also Cupples & Ridley, 2008; van Duppen & Spierings, 2013). In section 6.4.2, we will see that although several participants described opportunities for mild rebellion through motorcycling as appealing, few acted on this appeal. Breaking road rules while cycling appears to offer more accessible rebellion than taking up motorcycling. It

seems, then, that rule breaking may be encouraged by positive meanings associated with mild rebellion, as well as by an ability to avoid delays.

Expensive bicycles

Few participants explicitly commented on the influences of social meanings on their choice of bicycle. Two participants (both cyclists) suggested, however, that negative social meanings around road cycling might influence their bicycle choices. Matt indicated that he would be self-conscious on a road bicycle given the negative image some people have of road cyclists. Amelia was less explicit but did emphasise that, despite owning a road bike, she was not an elite biker of the kind who would buy a really expensive bicycle. This emphasis from Amelia may have been an attempt to distance herself from the negative meanings that she associated with a certain type of cyclist. In focus group FG3, Amelia said: "Clearly I've got a problem with the MAMILs[44] ((laughs)). (.) Yeah, really expensive bikes, and the gear, it's all about the stuff, you know". In her interview she concluded:

> I think I'm not part of the elite bike club because I don't probably care enough about the stuff. … I don't (.) thrive on having the newest bike or the best gear…a lot of it's about the interest in the gear, and I just don't care enough.

It is not entirely clear whether Amelia's attitude to her bicycle (or indeed her bike choice itself) was an attempt to distance herself (either consciously or not) from the negative meanings associated with those who do choose very expensive bicycles, but certainly she reflected on the comparison between herself and a group with which she did not wish to be associated.

[44] Middle-Aged Men In Lycra.

6.3.5 Section summary

In summary, for cycling, social meanings had most influence on cycling performances, some influence on mode choice, and only a very small influence on vehicle choices. I began by discussing the influences of norms and social support, environmental concerns, and risk. Participants described norms existing at a whole society level, and also within smaller groups. Group norms were described as able to have either a supportive or deterrent effect on cycling mode choice. Environmental concerns, while described in focus groups as a motivation for cycling, featured little in participants' own descriptions of influences on their practices. Risk was a more significant influence, with five participants being deterred from choosing cycling for at least some journeys, and four participants reporting adjusting their performances of cycling in response to perceptions of risk. Participants' responses to the seven interconnected meanings associated with road cycling were mixed. Participants described meanings associated with fitness as motivating cycling; they preferred not being connected to meanings associated with Lycra, coffee, imitation, arrogance, and expensive bikes; and their responses to meanings associated with rule breaking varied between a negative, and undesirable, association with arrogance and a positive, and desirable, association with mild rebellion.

6.4 Motorcycling

In this section, I consider how social meanings influenced participants' motorcycling practices. Of the five transport modes considered in detail in this thesis, motorcycling was the one least used by participants, both in terms of number of regular users and number of journeys completed by each mode. Three participants who completed the individual exercises considered themselves riders of powered two wheelers; although only one of these rode during her diary week. Eight additional participants commented that they had been regular motorcyclists in the past, although two specified that they had ridden farm bikes and rarely, if

ever, used them on the road. Most participants talked about the influence of social meanings on whether or not they chose to motorcycle, few participants talked about motorcycle vehicle choices or performances of motorcycling;[45] motorcycling mode choices are the primary focus of this section.

Of the five modes of transport covered in this thesis, motorcycling was the one for which I found the largest differences between the meanings described in the literature, those described by focus group participants, and those referred to by the same participants in their individual exercises. I begin this section on motorcycling with some observations about the differences in data collected using different methods.

The literature reviewed includes a strong focus on gendered meanings associated with motorcycling. Gender was sometimes mentioned by my research participants, but gendered meanings were much less of a central focus of participant discourse than of the literature. The difference between my results and the literature may come primarily from the focus in literature on studying motorcyclists and motorcycling cultures, whereas the small number of motorcyclists in my study means that the views represented are primarily those of people who did not ride motorcycles. Gendered social meanings may be less clear, or less salient, to those who do not motorcycle themselves.

Another difference in the meanings highlighted by different methods is that the focus groups were alone in highlighting strong connections between different kinds of motorcycles, and rider age and wealth. This connection was most often raised in response to pictures I showed participants of different kinds of motorcycles. Neither the literature discussed in

[45] The absence of discussions of motorcycling vehicle choices and performances was probably a direct result of the lack of relevance of these to participants who did not ride motorcycles.

section 3.3, nor the data from individual exercises for most of the participants in this research, have a focus on different kinds of motorcycles.[46] The different social meanings discussed in focus groups may then be a result of the specific focus on motorcycles, rather than a more fundamental difference in the meanings that exist in particular locations or amongst particular cohorts.

The two themes that are most clearly shown across the different sources used in this thesis are risk and rebellion. These are evidenced in slightly different ways in the different sources, and their complex interconnections are emphasised differently, but these two themes, broadly speaking, transcend the differences in methods. I now go on to consider the influence of each of these meanings in a little more detail.

6.4.1 Risk

Participants in six out of eight focus groups referred to motorcycling as risky, and in the individual exercises risk was sometimes described as a deterrent to motorcycling. In section 3.3.3, I described risk as often being constructed as either the result of dangerous riding practices and edgework, or as something that motorcyclists can control through the development and exercise of high levels of skill. Participants in this research reflected both of these perspectives and also the idea that motorcycling might be inherently risky, regardless of motorcyclists' practices.

Nine participants described the risks they associated with motorcycling as influencing their decisions not to motorcycle, but they constructed the risks in varied ways. Ross (who had ridden a motorcycle when younger) described the risk associated with motorcycling as

[46] I talked about different kinds of motorcycles with the motorcyclists in the study but conversations with most non-motorcycling participants focused on motorcycling per se, rather than on different kinds of vehicles.

being a result of dangerous riding practices (see also Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Crundall et al., 2008). He suggested that pushing the limits, or engaging in edgework, attracted him to motorcycling but explained that if he had a motorcycle he thought he would ride so fast he would kill himself. His description therefore included risk in both the attraction and deterrent for motorcycling.

In contrast, Stephen M emphasised the idea that motorcyclists may be able to control risk through the exercise of skill. He described his own lack of the embodied skill required as part of a deterrent to riding a motorcycle.

> I think there is a sort of like a fear about the safety side of it as well, with not having driven a motorcycle as a young person, I think if I started now I'd feel I'd be, you know, not very good at it…there are several keen motorcyclists in my department at work, and they talk about how they're sort of feeling the road,…and they become part of the bike, I mean it's actually almost an instinctive thing. And I don't get that sense whenever I am near a motorcycle, I don't feel any instinctive connection with it or anything.

The perception that risk can be controlled through skill is most commonly attributed to motorcyclists, rather than non-motorcyclists like Stephen M (Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001).

In contrast to both Ross and Stephen's perspectives, Matt expressed concern about vulnerability to the bad decisions of other road users, about the serious consequences of making a single mistake, and about the risks associated with roads with high speed limits. He

emphasised how frequently and badly motorcyclists are injured, apparently taking that as a given consequence of the conditions in which motorcycling would take place.

Matt's concerns appeared quite similar to those that several participants described their family members as having about their motorcycling or potential motorcycling. The concern, and influence, of family members with respect to activities that are perceived as being risky has been consistently noted in literature (Horton, 2007; Jderu, 2015; Rimano et al., 2015; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Steinbach et al., 2011). In my research, Amelia and Carrie both described concerns that their parents had expressed about motorcycling:

> Amelia: I said once to my mum that I would like a motorbike and she just assumed I would be just dead in minutes ((laughs)).

> Carrie: I just always thought [riding a scooter] was quite cool, but then also erm, kind of drummed in I guess, from my parents about how unsafe it is ((laughs)).

Similarly, Stephen R said he would worry if his son decided to buy a scooter. Darryl also said that his wife's concerns about risk constituted an underlying reason for him not commuting by motorcycle. Likewise Dena, one of the motorcyclists in the study, described how her partner was "insistent" that Dena wore a high visibility jacket when riding. These different expressions of concern all suggest that motorcycling was considered to be an inherently risky activity, rather than one for which risk was dependent on controllable riding practices. That is, these constructions of risk did not allow for a possibility that a motorcyclist could ride in a way that would be safe.

Participants clearly made several strong connections between motorcycling and risk. No perspective seemed more important or widely shared than the others, and there was not

(as suggested by Crundall et al., 2008; Musselwhite et al., 2012; and Natalier, 2001) a clear distinction in perspectives of risk between those who had and had not ridden motorcycles. Concerns around risk most clearly influenced mode choices and a decision not to motorcycle, but for the motorcyclists in the study they also influenced aspects of motorcycling performance such as clothing choices.

6.4.2 Rebellion and escape

I have previously discussed the connection between motorcycling and different forms of rebellion, including a temporary escape from the mundane nature of everyday life (see sections 3.3.2 and 5.3.3). Mark and Pearson (2001, p. 123) neatly conclude: "It seems that the more well-behaved and responsible we are, the more we yearn to be an Outlaw, at least a little bit, some of the time".

Several participants in my research mentioned the desirability of being associated with rebellion. The forms of motorcycling rebellion that participants found appealing ranged between very minor forms of lawlessness and escape from mundanity or responsibility. Amelia, for instance, talked about being able to "bend the law" to pass traffic on a motorcycle, Andy (FG4) talked about being a "rule breaker", Stephen R said "there's a big part of me that would love to break out", and Matt said that if he was unfortunate enough to lose his family he would "definitely be one of those rebellious, loner, middle-aged men that has a bike, and a fishing rod attached to it". These forms of rebellion are diverse, but they all associate motorcycling with stepping outside of the accepted status quo or of current norms.

Most participants, however, said that other factors prevented the appeal of rebellion from influencing them to motorcycle. Each non-motorcyclist for whom some form of rebellion was appealing, described other factors that prevented them from actually

motorcycling. Matt did have a family and with them in his life would not take the risks he associated with motorcycling. For Andy and Stephen R financial constraints were more important, and Amelia had several concerns, including what her male partner would think about her taking up such a masculine pursuit as motorcycling. Other participants described other forms of rebellion, and other mediating factors, but the theme remained that rebellion was appealing to these participants, but was unlikely to be actioned. As discussed in section 6.3.4, some participants found a similar, but more easily attainable, sense of rebellion in certain cycling practices. There were, of course, also participants who did not find rebellion appealing. Broadly speaking, the reasons for not motorcycling were the same for those who did, and did not, find rebellion appealing.

Rebellion was not a particularly strong theme for those participants who rode motorcycles, perhaps because the very fact that they motorcycled already meant that motorcycling was less associated with stepping outside of the established status quo. However, Chris agreed that he saw himself as a little bit rebellious and as enjoying the thrills of motorcycling. In line with risk perspectives that emphasise risk control through accumulated skill, Chris went on to stress that he rode very safely, had taken great care to develop good motorcycling skills, and was very aware of his responsibilities to his family, especially in the absence of personal insurance (see also Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Musselwhite et al., 2012; Natalier, 2001). Thus, while Chris saw meanings associated with rebellion and thrill-seeking as appealing, he also adhered to risk perspectives that emphasise skill and control.

6.4.3 Section summary

In summary, there was relatively little discussion of the influences of social meanings on motorcycling practices compared to influences on the other modes already discussed.

However, participants did talk about the influences of perceptions of risk and they described several distinct understandings of the risk associated with motorcycling. Participants also demonstrated that social meanings connecting motorcycling to rebellion and escape were appealing for some people. Although several participants expressed this appeal, most identified other factors that outweighed the appeal and had caused them to reject the idea of motorcycling. A number of other social meanings were commonly raised by participants in focus groups, but these appeared to influence participants less than meanings associated with risk and rebellion and escape.

6.5 Bus Use

I opened this thesis with Moore's (2010, p. 149) declaration that "widespread use of the bus will never occur if it's viewed as the 'loser cruiser'". In this section, I describe some of the influences of social meanings on bus use. Only four participants talked about any recent regular or systematic use of Christchurch buses, and only one participant took more than three trips by bus during her diary week. Although the number of bus journeys made by participants was low, at around 3% of the total number of journeys, this is broadly comparable to the national share of journeys made by public transport (Ministry of Transport, 2015a). Below, I describe responses to the "loser cruiser" stereotype and explore the influences of social meanings (particularly an apparent anti-bus habitus) on bus use. I conclude this section by touching briefly on whether any social meanings attracted participants to bus use.

6.5.1 Loser cruiser

Participants did not, of their own accord, generally talk about the influences of social meanings on practices of bus use, so in many cases I deliberately prompted relevant discussions. My own influence on the results is, then, stronger in this section than in others;

some possible reasons for the need to prompt discussions are raised below. When prompting discussions, I commonly started with the clearly identified connection between buses and "losers", or between buses and people who have no other transport options (see section 5.4.1). Most participants were then happy to discuss these connections but there were very few instances of the related social meanings being described as having any influence at all on transport practices.

Most of the participants who were asked how they felt about the stereotype that bus users had no other options said that this did not influence their bus use. Nudwa, for example, said: "I wouldn't think [people assumed I had no other options] at all…I mean, a bus is for anybody, it doesn't really matter who the heck's on it". Chris took a slightly different tack:

> Helen: Now buses are quite commonly associated with people who don't have other options. Would that be a deterrent to you for going on a bus?
>
> Chris: Er (.) not really. I mean, I kind of, can get along with people from all walks of life.

Very occasionally a participant did acknowledge a slight response to the negative social meanings associated with bus use. For example, Carrie responded to my question by talking about wondering whether other passengers on buses judged her according to the perceived status of the residential areas in which she got on and off buses; she said:

> [I wonder] when you get off in different places, do people think 'oh, you know, that person [lives here]'?...Where I usually get off the bus at the moment…it's quite run down there, coz we live like, out 10 minutes from there, and…I always wonder, do

> people think that, you know, you live like near here kind of thing. …I don't really care, but I always wonder.

This reflection was not entirely based on the social meanings associated with buses, and instead focused on residential suburbs, however, it appeared connected to the perception of bus users as members of low status groups with few transport options. Margaret came closest to saying that social meanings around bus use influenced her transport practices; I asked whether she felt she fitted stereotypes of bus users and she replied:

> No, I wouldn't see myself like the (.) I probably have some (.) No. I guess I stereotype the bus users of Christchurch as more, yeah, lower socio-economic, don't have much of a choice and might not have a car, and that kind of thing. I don't really (.) put professionals on there. But if I was in Wellington, I would definitely put professionals as using the trains or the buses, because I know professionals in Wellington who do, but I don't know <u>anyone</u> who uses the bus in Christchurch to get to work as a young professional. <u>…</u>But then I was happy to use [the bus] in Dunedin, because Dunedin had, there were professionals who used the bus.

No participants openly said that they would be deterred from using the bus by the loser cruiser stereotype and associated social meanings; Margaret came close to doing so, but she was alone in this regard.

6.5.2 Unrecognised influence

Social meanings associating buses with low status were very prominent in focus groups and in literature but participants described them as having hardly any influence. There are several possible reasons for the combination of the existence of a very consistent negative social meaning, and very limited evidence of that meaning having any influence. First, of

course, is the possibility that the surface observation is correct; that is, the meaning was widely shared and understood, but had little influence, perhaps because of widespread stereotype suppression (Devine, 1989). Subsequent observations (discussed shortly) suggest that, while this may have been the case for some participants, other dynamics may also have played a role.

Second then, is that the inferior status of buses did have an influence, but the low social desirability of admitting to being influenced by status deterred participants from talking about it. This is a distinct possibility, but the credibility of this explanation is lessened by the number of occasions on which participants did talk about being embarrassed to admit things, being aware that they were being politically incorrect or judgemental, or hating knowing that their own reactions to something went against what they felt they should do or think. Some examples of participants acknowledging the low social desirability of their comments include the following:

> Amelia: I feel like I told you things quite straight and, you know, I might come across as judgemental in this and that and I mean I have to be like, professional, at work every day, you know, you say things the right way and, it's kind of nice to be able to just go 'oh you know, the fat people…' which I could never say at work.
>
> Dena: I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I did say it, I said 'do I suit this car?'
>
> Margaret: I definitely prefer the stereotypes of the old lady car than the student car. I think it shows I have a little bit of (.) money I guess. Cars are a bit of a status symbol I guess. No, I don't 'guess', they <u>are</u>. People use them as a status symbol. (RQD6)

All of these instances suggest that at least some of the participants in this research quite openly expressed socially sensitive opinions, even though that may have made some of them feel slightly uncomfortable. Thus, although some participants may have avoided admissions related to the perceived low status of bus users, others probably would have been open about them.

A third possible explanation is that some participants were influenced by the low status of buses but that they, themselves, were unaware of this influence. There are some indications that this may have been the case. Particularly, there are indications that many participants simply did not consider themselves part of a social group that used buses and, as a result, bus use appeared completely alien to them. These participants did not view the idea of their own bus use negatively; they simply did not consider it. Margaret supported this hypothesis: "I've taken the bus like three times in Christchurch so, it never enters my head as an option" (RQD1).

Also, although routes and scheduling were often given as reasons for not using the bus, several participants commented that they were not actually familiar with the routes and schedules they assumed to be inadequate. For example, I asked Amelia whether she would use a bus if there was one that conveniently connected her home and work, she replied:

> Well, this very project that you're doing, Helen, has made me think that there probably is. I don't know! I mean I live near Barrington and I go to Burwood, so there probably is (.) some kind of bus system. I'm sure there's Barrington to The Palms [mall] on some level.

Thus Amelia suggested that she had simply never considered the option of the bus or worked out whether it would be an acceptable transport mode. Similarly, Andy said that it was possible that there was a bus he could take to work but he had not "bothered" to find out. Sunny also made a similar point, in that she wished public transport in Christchurch was better, but went on to add: "I probably could do a bit more, be a bit more switched on about it myself, and actually even find out if there is public transport available that I could use."

To some extent, having not investigated public transport options is a response to the availability and adequacy of other modes of travel, and also to habit and past experience. Several previous studies have found that habitual users of one transport mode report that using another mode is unimaginable or simply does not occur to them (Bean et al., 2008; Fujii & Kitamura, 2003; Root et al., 1996; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b; Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011). Weinberger and Goetzke (2011) went further and demonstrated that people moving to new homes used their previous experiences in their selection of transport. Particularly, those who had previously lived in areas where public transport was poor or unavailable were more likely than others to continue to own cars when they moved to urban areas where public transport provision was of a high quality. They suggest that:

> It may not even occur to [a person] to use the T as public transport may be far outside of her experience and it may also not occur to her that public transport may be a viable option. (Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011, p. 123)[47]

These arguments suggest that failure to consider a particular option can be a result of habit or non-conscious decision making. There does, however, seem to be a little more going

[47] 'The T' is a vernacular reference to public transport provided by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

on here. Particularly, a significant number of participants in my research commented that they had been much happier using public transport in other cities, or other countries, than in Christchurch. This demonstrates that these participants did have prior, and often positive, experiences of using public transport. Although these participants did not habitually use public transport in Christchurch, its use could not be considered to be "far outside their experience" (Weinberger & Goetzke, 2011, p. 123). When describing their uses of public transport elsewhere, participants combined comments on the practicality of public transport, the costs or hassles of driving, and the idea that using public transport could be a normal thing to do. Heather and Darryl made these points particularly clearly:

> Heather: Like, for example, when I lived overseas it was expensive to park a car anywhere, you know…it was totally discouraged, and everybody used the underground and the buses and things so that was the accepted mode of travel.
>
> Darryl: We've been to places like Melbourne a couple of times on holidays. And we think nothing of jumping on and off the tram you know, quite quickly after a couple of days you think 'oh, it's pretty easy'…whereas, you know, here in Christchurch, you kind of don't think about it. The car is kind of king.

These quotes show how practical concerns and social norms intersected in participants' descriptions of their use of public transport overseas. When asked about potential bus use in Christchurch, most participants listed practical or instrumental obstacles, but my analysis suggests that the kinds of social norms described as influencing travel overseas also play a role in mode choices in Christchurch. As we will see shortly, this may be the case even though few participants talked about any influence of social norms on their bus use.

6.5.3 Anti-bus habitus

We can draw support from Bourdieu's notion of habitus to help explain how participants may be unaware of being influenced by social norms. Habitus describes an individual's tastes and dispositions; these are influenced by the totality of the individual's socialisation, including their upbringing, education, and the tastes and norms of their social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Sallaz, 2010). Essentially, habitus inculcates in us a sense of what is natural or acceptable for people like us to do. Importantly, Bourdieu argues that although habitus is not usually consciously considered, it guides an individual towards making choices that will be seen as appropriate to a person in their social position (Bourdieu, 1984). Pred summarises:

> Through the operation of habitus the particular economic and cultural practices in which individuals of a given group or class partake appear 'natural,' 'sensible,' or 'reasonable,' even though there is no awareness of the manner in which those practices are either adjusted to other practices or structurally limited. (1981, p. 8)

We could argue, that for many of the participants in this research it appeared natural, sensible, and reasonable not to take the bus, although these participants may not have been aware of why that was so. Authors who have not made an explicit association with habitus, have commented on the role of socialisation in cementing transport practices. For example, Shaw and Docherty comment:

> There is evidence to suggest that children who are driven around a lot by their parents become accustomed to car use and effectively just morph into the next generation of car drivers. (2014b, p. 77)

Similarly, Shove et al. (2012) refer to the potential for encouraging certain practices through making them appear reasonable or suitable to certain social groups. More explicitly, one of the few studies to consider transport and habitus concludes:

> Traveling in general is performed in ways that are not consciously considered as gendered, or ethnic, or representative of particular class segments. In London, one simply prefers to walk, or uses public transport, in ways that can appear natural. That these dispositions are part of a *habitus* is only visible in the breach, when normalised routines are disrupted, as they are when one considers taking up cycling. (Steinbach et al., 2011, p. 1129)

Although the extract above refers to cycling in London, a similar point can be made about bus use in Christchurch. My participants may not have consciously considered bus use to be inappropriate, they just reported, apparently quite naturally, preferring other modes of transport.

Steinbach et al. (2011) comment that habitus is not normally visible. The apparent anti-bus habitus of some of my participants only became apparent when I considered the dispositions of multiple participants together. This habitus would also not be visible if I had simply accepted the obvious explanation that the negative social meanings associated with buses *appeared* to have no influence because they *actually* had no influence.

Of all of my participants, Basil (FG4) probably came closest to recognising an anti-bus habitus. He suggested that tourists often look more comfortable than locals do on buses; when I asked him to explain what he meant, he very clearly described a sense of bus use not being in the habitus of many New Zealanders, in that it does not feel natural or appropriate.

> Oh [tourists] just, it's second nature to them. You know, they're totally relaxed in a bus, you know. New Zealanders aren't always. I know I'm sort of, I'll sit in a bus, occasionally, when I'm in Wellington I'll get on a bus, you know, but I wasn't relaxed, I don't drive in a bus very often, don't ride in a bus very much. It was OK, I wasn't going to fly out the door or anything, but you know I just, it just wasn't my preferred mode of transport. I'd rather hire a car you know.

Perhaps as a result of the apparent alienness of bus use, Basil did not recall ever having taken a bus in Christchurch.

I have already noted that social norms had a significant impact on participants' transport mode choices and that norms most commonly led to people driving (see section 6.2). Clearly, habitus and norms share considerable common ground (see also chapter 2). However, the explicitly non-conscious, or "prereflexive" (Sallaz, 2010, p. 323) nature of habitus provides a better framework for explaining why few participants talked openly about the influence of social meanings and norms on their bus use.

6.5.4 Choosing bus use

In section 5.4.2, I noted that focus group participants did describe people who chose to take the bus. There are very few examples, in the data collected, of participants describing social meanings as attracting them to bus use. A number of participants described having used buses in the past, or being potentially willing to do so in future. They particularly described bus use as a possibility where it was especially convenient or cheap, or where parking or traffic issues made driving especially troublesome. Some participants also described the advantages of being able to use public transport journey time to do things like read or listen to music. There were, however, very few examples of social meanings

attracting participants to bus use. Four participants did allude to a sense that they associated buses with morally laudable characteristics such as environmentally sensitive behaviours, and one other did describe why he thought Christchurch would be significantly improved as a city if it had better public transport systems. There was almost no evidence of these positive associations encouraging actual bus use. This is perhaps unsurprising if an anti-bus habitus, of which participants were not consciously aware, inhibited consideration of bus use as an acceptable option for travel.

6.5.5 Section summary

In summary, despite focus group participants expressing a strong and consistent negative social meaning associated with buses, there was no explicit evidence that this influenced participants' transport practices. Deeper analysis, however, suggests that many participants simply did not consider themselves part of a social group that used buses and rarely, if ever, considered the option of catching a bus. This notion is supported by evidence that, despite citing instrumental disadvantages to bus use—such as cost and inconvenient schedules—a number of participants had not investigated the bus travel options available to them. Also, some participants reported being more likely to catch a bus elsewhere, particularly in places where bus use appeared a "normal" transport practice for people in the participants' own social situation. It seems likely that a number of participants were unaware of the influence that social meanings had on their transport mode choices with regard to bus use. This unawareness suggests that participants' unconscious habitus may be leading them away from bus use, making bus use seem like an option unworthy of consideration. There were no substantial indications that social meanings *attracted* participants to bus use.

6.6 Walking

Very few social meanings around walking were described in any detail in focus groups and literature; similarly there were very few social meanings in evidence in discussions of walking in participants' individual exercises. Where social meanings were discussed, there were few consistent themes; I have, however, identified some influences on transport mode choices of social meanings associated with health, fitness, and obesity. I have also observed some interesting features of an apparent linkage between the taken-for-granted nature of walking, a social norm of walking, and the common perception that walking is primarily a leisure activity. In this section, I first consider the influences of social meanings associated with health, fitness, and obesity, and then move on to considering social norms, leisure, and the cultural invisibility of walking.

6.6.1 Health, fitness, and obesity

There is slight evidence that social meanings associating walking with health and fitness influenced some participants' mode choices. Focus group discussions highlighted an assumption that people walk for reasons of health and fitness, and some participants clearly did consider walking to be beneficial in that respect. In particular, walking was clearly important to some participants due to an association they made between not walking and obesity. Nudwa was one of five participants who made a clear association between not walking and getting fat, he said: "I know I need to [walk], otherwise I'll turn into a fat slob, you know". Alongside the five participants who linked their walking to the avoidance of obesity, a couple more linked walking with a more general promotion of health and fitness.

The connection that participants made between not walking and obesity is particularly interesting in light of increasing reports that the role of exercise in maintaining a healthy body weight has been overplayed (Luke & Cooper, 2013). If these reports are correct, then

the association made by participants is likely to be the result of exposure to social meanings, rather than to personal experience of weight loss as a result of walking.

Comments about walking and obesity differ slightly from those made by Ross and Amelia when talking about cycling and obesity. Avoiding obesity through cycling was connected to professional competence. In contrast, walking was more often connected to ideas of good parenting, and so to children's (rather than adult's) health and weight:

> Mark: [When you're walking with children you can practice things] like coordination with walking and balancing, just walking along the side of the street, and walking in lines, and jumping, and all this sort of stuff. …[If you're driven everywhere] you just sit there, get fat.
>
> Matt: I don't know what's going on with kids these days but I think a lot of them should walk to school, when you look at the size of them. I mean they seem to get a ride to school all the time.
>
> Tracy: There's a lady [who does the school run] who had a young baby, and I thought, 'stick it in the pushchair, go for a walk' ((laughs))…And the kid might not be so (.) they're not large people, but they're certainly not small.

Tracy went on to talk about passing good habits on to the next generation, thus reinforcing the idea that walking was commonly connected to children's body shape and to ideas of good parenting. Some participants talked about choosing to walk partly to contribute to their own health and fitness and others focused more on their children, clearly though, meanings around health and fitness influenced some participants' decisions to walk.

6.6.2 Social norms, leisure, and invisibility

Participants described social meanings as having relatively limited influences on their walking practices, but through considering the social meanings that were *not* described as having an influence on walking practices, I have identified a further connection between social meanings associated with social norms, leisure, and the perceived invisibility of walking.

There is a striking contrast between Tanya's statement in her focus group that everyone walks, and her reflections on her own everyday walking experiences, during which she described rarely seeing other pedestrians, and feeling unusual and alone. The focus groups suggest a significant descriptive social norm of walking exists; that is, it is considered normal for people to walk. Participant diaries also suggest that walking is normal, in that most of the participants (18 out of 25) did describe walking somewhere at some point during their diary week. Although many more trips were made by car, most participants did walk for some trips. In contrast to this apparent normality of walking, participants' reflections on walking suggested that they felt alone and unusual when doing so. This apparent contradiction may be related to the visibility of the different kinds of walking that people do.

About three quarters of the walking journeys participants made during their diary weeks were undertaken for primarily utilitarian purposes, that is with the goal of getting somewhere rather than simply going for a walk for leisure purposes.[48] Despite this dominance of utility walking Tanya concluded:

[48] I acknowledge that the distinction between leisure and utility walking is something of a false dichotomy. Walking may incorporate both leisure and utility purposes at the same time (Aldred, 2012; Pinch & Reimer, 2012; Spinney, 2011). Such blurring of the dichotomy may occur particularly in crossover activities such as shopping or sociable walking between entertainment venues (Andrews et al., 2012). Despite

> I get the feeling, in Christchurch, that walking is a bit more of a leisure activity rather than a 'get somewhere' activity. If people actually need to be somewhere and they're in a hurry they'd rather drive, but, you know, Sunday afternoon walking seems to be quite popular. (RQD7)

Mark similarly argued that leisure walking was considerably more popular than utility walking. There is no evidence in my research to suggest that leisure walking was more prevalent than utility walking, but there is evidence to suggest that it was more visible. Leisure walking may cause people to congregate in outside areas (such as parks or markets) for considerable periods of time, and Tanya described noticing more people out walking in these kinds of circumstances. Leisure walking may also be more social, and more likely to be the subject of casual conversations than, for example, the sorts of short utility walks that participants undertook, for example, to the shop or doctor's surgery. Pooley et al. (2013) also note that recreational walking appeared more visible, and was more often commented on by their research participants, than was utility walking.

If leisure walking is more visible than utility walking, utility walkers may feel that they are doing something unusual even if they are not. In this kind of normative misperception there seems to be a difference between what other people *appear* to do, and what other people *actually* do. Normative misperception has been noted before in studies of a variety of different social norms (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Forward, 2009; Litt et al., 2014). With walking, people appear to engage primarily in (visible) leisure walking, but participants actually engaged primarily in (less visible) utility walking.

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acknowledging the falseness of the dichotomy, here using binary terms serves an analytical purpose and so the simplification is pursued to make a point about normative misperception.

Tanya did say that she wished more people walked so she would not feel like "the only one", but she concluded her diary saying that she enjoyed walking and would continue to do it "even if no-one else does" (RQD7). Thus Tanya suggested that she would find a more visible social norm around walking to be comforting, but indicated that she did not change her mode choice or practices in the absence of such a visible norm. In contrast to Tanya's perspective, Mark and David, two other regular walkers, reported not minding being slightly unusual in their transport practices; David even confirmed that he liked "being different" and "not fitting in to the usual mould" (Interview). Mark commented that people in cars may look at him and think "oh look at that loser who's having to walk", but he emphasised that this did not bother him (and that he might make comparable judgements of the car occupants' practices).

Although neither Mark, nor David, nor Tanya described their practices as being influenced by the absence of other walkers, their comments do highlight that they encountered few other people on the streets, and did not recognise walking as a visible norm. Lack of a visible walking norm did not dissuade the existing walkers from walking, but might have a non-conscious dissuasive influence on people who would walk more if a more visible norm existed. I have already mentioned that the existence of a strong driving norm encouraged driving and dissuaded use of other transport modes.

In section 5.5, I explained that focus group participants struggled to describe social meanings associated with walkers. They commonly argued that everyone walks and that walking was not associated with strong social meanings. Walkers failing to see or meet one another while walking may contribute to this absence of widely shared social meanings around walking. D. L. Hamilton and Uhles (2000, p. 468) explain:

> As perceivers interact with more members of a social group and gain more information about that category, they are increasingly likely to encounter group members that do not 'fit' the general conception of the group. As this happens, perceivers recognize smaller segments within the overall group. Each subgroup is seen as possessing some attributes that define the overarching category but also sharing other characteristics that differentiate it both from the overall group conception and from other subgroups within the category. Perceivers may also develop generalized conceptions of these subtypes, and hence will not only have a stereotype about the total group (e.g., women) but also have and use stereotypes about the subtypes (e.g., housewives, feminists, etc.).

If utility walkers do not "perceive" one another, then they may be aware that an overarching stereotype is inappropriate for an activity that "everyone" does, but may have insufficient differentiating information to generate stereotypes of subgroups. This logic, along with construction of walking as a linking mode, may help to explain apparent disconnects between the prevalence of walking and the lack of social meanings that appear to be associated with it.

6.6.3 Section summary

In summary, although few social meanings were associated with walking there was some consistency in participant responses to the social meanings that they did express. First, there was evidence that participants were motivated to walk by concerns about health and fitness, and particularly by a desire to avoid becoming overweight. Second, there was a focus on walking norms and visibility. The relative visibilities of walking for leisure and for utility may have made leisure walking seem more common, and more normal, than utility walking. Although few participants described social meanings around utility walking as a deterrent to

walking, social norms most often encouraged car driving and may have tacitly discouraged walking.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an explanation of the different kinds of influences that social meanings had on participants' transport practices and particularly on their mode choices, vehicle choices, and performances of travel. It went on to present a mode-by-mode analysis of the influences of different social meanings. Particularly, it has drawn from the detailed review of widely shared social meanings developed in chapter 5 to highlight which particular social meanings did, and did not, influence participants' transport practices.

Participants had mixed responses to social meanings associated with driving. This chapter particularly highlighted responses to meanings associated with three different kinds of vehicles: older cars, European cars, and small city cars. In each case, participants often broadly agreed on the meanings associated with certain vehicles, but differed in their responses to those meanings. For each type of vehicle, some participants were happy to be linked to the associated set of social meanings, while others were not. Where participants did not want to be associated with a certain social meaning they commonly used their vehicle choices, or driving performances (such as parking out of sight) to avoid such connections. Although responses to social meanings around different vehicles were mixed, most participants agreed that driving was considered normal, and not morally dubious in Christchurch.

Social meanings associated with cycling were described as having most influence on cycling performances, some influence on mode choice, and only a very small influence on vehicle choices. Perceptions of risk provided significant influences on both mode choices and

cycling performances. A desire to remain healthy, and to maintain distance from obesity, also provided an influence on mode choices. Environmental concerns, however, although prominent in focus group discussions of cycling, rarely featured in participants' descriptions of influences on their own cycling choices. Participants responded to negative meanings connected to Lycra, coffee, imitation and arrogance through performances of courteous cycling. In contrast, some participants likened rule breaking to desirable acts of minor rebellion that could be incorporated into performances of cycling.

With considerable similarity to responses to meanings around cycling, participants described perceptions of risk as influencing their choice of whether or not to motorcycle. Participants also described social meanings connected with motorcycling and rebellion and escape as appealing, but usually described these as overshadowed by other factors (including risk) that led them to reject the idea of motorcycling.

Although participants in focus groups identified a strong and consistently negative social meaning associated with buses, few participants acknowledged this meaning having any influence on their transport practices. Deeper analysis of participant comments suggests that meanings may have had an influence on participant practices, but that participants were unaware of this influence. Particularly, the analysis suggested that participants' unconscious habitus may have led them away from bus use, and that bus use was commonly not considered an acceptable travel option.

Finally, some participants were motivated to walk by concerns around health and fitness and, like cycling, with a desire to avoid obesity. Although no other instances of social meanings had a consistent influence on walking practices, it was noted that utility walking was commonly described as being an unusual thing to do. Leisure walking, although

apparently actually less prevalent than utility walking, may appear to be more common because of its greater visibility. There were very few examples of participants describing being influenced by the lack of a utility walking norm, but other data suggested that current norms encourage driving and the lack of a walking norm may have some deterrent effect on choosing to walk for transport.

This chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which particular social meanings influenced the transport practices of Christchurch participants. One of the benefits of conducting multi-modal research, however, is the ability to bring wide-ranging results together to look for systematic similarities and differences and to begin to theorise about wider processes and dynamics. In the next chapter, I turn to a cross-modal consideration of the extent of influence of social meanings on transport practices, and to an exploration of how extant concepts and theories can enhance understandings of the influences of social meanings.

Chapter 7: Results—Conceptualising the Influences of Social Meanings

The previous chapter explored some of the influences of social meanings on participants' transport practices. In it, I took an in-depth approach at a small scale, that is, I considered particular meanings and described participants' responses to them in some detail. In this chapter, I move to a higher level of generalization, focusing less on specific meanings and responses, and more on the prevalence and conceptualisation of the influences of social meanings on everyday transport practices.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first of these sections considers the prevalence and importance of social meanings; that is, how much influence social meanings have on transport practices. This section concludes my investigation of the influences that social meanings have on transport practices (the second research goal). The second main section revisits some of the theoretical debates and positions reviewed in section 2.3. Here I consider how these debates and positions can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices; this section addresses the third research goal. The third main section draws out two observations that have implications for methods to be used in future research on social meanings.

7.1 Prevalence and Importance

Here, I consider the prevalence and importance of the influences of social meanings on participants' transport practices. In particular, I consider *how many* participants talked about being influenced by social meanings in respect of their mode choices, vehicle choices, and travel performances. I also consider *how much* those participants reported being influenced; for example, were social meanings described as a major or minor influence on a participant's practices?

In this part of the thesis, I approach quantification of the influences of social meanings, but I do not pursue substantial quantitative analyses. The data collected are much more amenable to qualitative than quantitative analysis; only 25 participants completed the individual exercises, meaning the sample is too small for most statistical methods. In addition, the relatively unstructured approach of the RQD exercise, and semi-structured approach to the interviews, means the same information cannot always be provided for each participant; this often results in a sample size much less than 25 for any given question. Further, it would be extremely difficult to quantify the influences of social meanings of which participants were not aware and which they did not talk about. It is, however, still possible to draw some conclusions about the prevalence and importance of the influence of social meanings as described by the cohort engaged in this research.

7.1.1 Prevalence of influence

In chapter 6, I described the kinds of influences that social meanings had on participants' transport practices: particularly, influences on mode choices, vehicle choices, and travel performances. Here, I look at how prevalent those influences were, that is, at how many participants described social meanings influencing their practices in these ways.

I counted the number of participants who indicated that social meanings had any influence on their mode choices, vehicle choices, or performances of travel; the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Prevalence of the influence of social meanings

Type of influence	Participants (n=25)	Percentage (%)
Any type of influence	23	92
Mode choice	20	80
Vehicle choice	19	76
Performance of travel	20	80

Of the 25 participants in the individual exercises, 20 (80%) indicated that social meanings influenced their mode choices on some level. Likewise, 20 participants (80%) indicated that social meanings influenced their performances of travel, and 19 participants (76%) indicated that social meanings influenced their vehicle choices. There were only two participants who did not indicate that social meanings influenced them in any of these regards. This means that 23 out of 25 participants (92%) expressed being influenced by social meanings with regard to either their mode or vehicle choices, or their travel performances. This suggests a very high prevalence of all three of the main kinds of influences of social meanings identified.

Considering the absolute prevalence of the main types of influences of social meanings helps to provide a broader overview than the detailed descriptions in previous chapters. However, this kind of analysis takes no account of the importance of social meanings relative to other influences on transport practices. The next section considers whether social meanings were major or minor influences on participants' transport practices.

7.1.2 Importance of influence

Almost all of the participants in this research reported being influenced by social meanings with regard to their mode choices, vehicle choices, or travel performances. As we

will see, although social meanings did influence transport practices, they may not have been major influences. Although almost all participants reported being influenced by social meanings to some extent, only 20% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their transport practices overall.

I reviewed all the data provided by each participant with the goal of establishing whether social meanings appeared to have a major or minor influence on their transport practices. The definitions of major and minor are necessarily subjective when applied to extremely varied qualitative data, but in essence these terms reflect three characteristics of participants' descriptions of influences: attribution, emphasis, and timescale.

- *Attribution* concerns the extent to which participants attributed their own transport practices to the influence of a social meaning. For example, if a participant said "my main reason for choosing that car was that I felt it provided the right professional image", social meanings would be more likely to be considered a major influence on their transport practices than if the participant said "I liked the image of the car but other factors were more important in my decision".
- *Emphasis* focuses on the way in which participants described the influences of social meanings. For example, if a participant described the influences of a social meaning in considerable, emphatic detail, and with great enthusiasm, then that social meaning would be likely to be considered a major influence. In contrast, if a participant briefly mentioned the influence of a social meaning, and moved quickly on to other influences on transport practices then that meaning would more likely be considered a minor influence.
- *Timescale* emphasises the importance of the temporal extent of the influence of social meanings. For example, if a participant described a social meaning in a way that

suggested it had an ongoing influence on their transport practices, that would be more likely to be considered a major influence than, for example, a participant who described being concerned about social meanings in relation to a single journey.

I reviewed all of the data, keeping each of these factors in mind. For each participant, I determined whether social meanings could be considered to be a major influence on their transport practices overall. Table 4 showed that 92% of participants were influenced by social meanings on some level. In contrast, social meanings were reported to be a *major* influence on transport practices by only 20% of participants. This suggests that although social meanings influenced most participants' transport practices, for most participants they were only minor influences.

My many detailed reviews of the data suggested that different factors were important to participants in respect of the different transport modes they used. For example, a person might primarily use their car for instrumental reasons, their bicycle for affective reasons, and their motorcycle for reasons connected with social meanings. I suspected that looking at the importance of social meanings over all of a participant's transport practices might obscure the importance that social meanings had for the use of a particular mode.

I reviewed the data for each participant for each mode of transport. Table 5 shows that 72% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their use of at least one mode of transport. Of the 25 participants, 12 reported that social meanings were a major influence on their choice to use (or not use) at least one transport mode. For this group, influences on motorcycling and cycling were most common. Also, of the 25 participants, 10 reported that social meanings were a major influence on their vehicle choices for one mode. Participants reported major influences on vehicle choices to be almost exclusively related to

car choices (one participant reported a major influence on his bicycle choice). Finally, of the 25 participants, 4 reported that social meanings were a major influence on their travel performances. Two of these participants referred to car travel, one to travel by bicycle, and one to travel by bus.

Table 5: Major influences on participants' use of different transport modes

Type of influence	Participants (n=25)	Percentage (%)
Any major influence	18	72
Mode choice	12	48
Vehicle choice	10	40
Performance of travel	4	16

Analysis has revealed three very different total figures regarding the influence of social meanings. Ninety-two percent of participants reported being influenced by social meanings to some extent; 20% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their transport practices overall; and 72% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their use of at least one mode of transport. This suggests that influences of social meanings were very prevalent, that social meanings represented a major influence on some aspects of transport for most participants, but that social meanings were not a major influence on transport practices overall for this cohort. This diversity of figures strongly supports the earlier assertion that transport practices are multiply determined. Social meanings have many influences on transport practices, but so do other factors.

If we accept that transport practices are multiply determined then we would expect most participants to be able to identify a number of influences on their transport practices. It

seems quite likely that research focused on *any* of the factors known to influence transport practices (time, cost, habit, affect, embodied sensations, physical environment…) would find that a large majority of participants would agree that that factor influenced them in some way.

Clearly, not all of the factors that have some influence will be major influences in any given circumstance. Of those people who identify social meanings as having some influence, only a subset will identify them as having a major influence. Likewise, only a subset of those who consider social meanings a major influence on one mode, will consider them to be a major influence overall. Thus, it makes sense that a large majority of participants were influenced by social meanings to some extent, a smaller majority were majorly influenced in respect of at least one of their transport modes, and a smaller number again were majorly influenced in respect of their travel overall. This dynamic is illustrated conceptually in Figure 10.

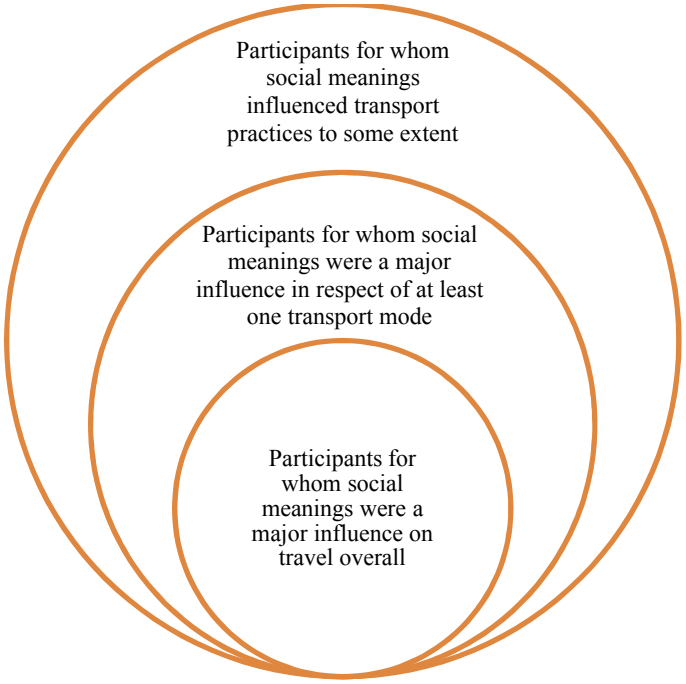

Figure 10: Nested dynamic of the influences of social meanings

This nested dynamic makes intuitive sense, but it may also reflect some features of the methods used in this research. First, the RQD exercise encouraged participants to focus on specific practices in detail, rather than on travel overall. This may have facilitated recognition of the influences of social meanings with regard to specific practices but not with regard to overall transport use. Second, if self-presentation effects confound reporting of the influences of social meanings (Hiscock et al., 2002; M. Jensen, 1999; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Steg, 2005; Steg et al., 2001) then it may be easier to admit to being influenced in small ways rather than to describe social meanings as having a major influence on transport practices overall. The nature of the results (many influences but few major ones) may therefore reflect some methodological biases as well as reflecting participants' understandings of the influences of social meanings. Further research could assess this issue in more detail.

The results detailed in this section raise an important methodological point. In the context of multiply determined practices, there are likely to be many different (and probably interdependent) influences operating at different levels of importance and at different scales. It may be insurmountably difficult to investigate all of these different influences on a multiply determined practice simultaneously. However, research that recognises this multiplicity and tries to reflect this context in investigations is likely to be considerably more illuminating than research that focuses exclusively on a single scale, or on only the most important influences.

7.1.3 Section summary

In the first part of this chapter I have considered the importance and prevalence of the influence of social meanings. First, I demonstrated that the influence of social meanings was prevalent. Most participants (92%) reported that their mode choices, vehicle choices, or

performances of travel were influenced by social meanings on some level. Second, I showed that not all of these influences were considered major by participants, and that only 72% of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their use of at least one mode of transport. Twenty percent of participants reported that social meanings were a major influence on their transport practices overall. These different levels of influence make logical sense in the context of multiply determined practices. These different levels of influence also highlight the need to carefully consider the scale at which research projects attempt to measure the influences of social meanings.

7.2 Understanding Influences

In section 2.3, I highlighted several theoretical positions and debates that might be able to facilitate improved understandings of the influence of social meanings on transport practices. In this section, I revisit those positions and debates, assessing how useful they are in facilitating deeper understandings of the results of this research. This section constitutes my main contribution to addressing the third research goal, that is, to identifying some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices.

One of the main advantages of multi-modal transport research is its ability to identify the ways in which influences operate similarly or differently for different modes of transport. This multi-modal approach therefore facilitates a consideration of the theoretical and conceptual positions that can enhance understandings of the influences of social meanings across all modes of transport. In this section, I review the results of the research, drawing out common themes and important differences in the ways social meanings influence transport practices across and between the five modes of transport investigated in this research.

7.2.1 Conscious and non-conscious

In section 2.3.1, I explained that social meanings might influence people through both conscious and non-conscious pathways. Accordingly, participants in this research appeared to be aware of some influences of social meanings on their practices and unaware of others.

In this section, I look both at influences of which participants were consciously aware, and those of which they were less consciously aware. Along the way, I demonstrate the relevance of each of the theoretical perspectives explained in section 2.3.1. First, I review how the influence of social meanings on car choices can be related to rational choice theories, and also describe responses to health motivations and to risk as existing in a conscious realm. Next, I review participants' conscious and non-conscious responses to norms and habitus. Subsequently, I consider some of the influences on practices that participants struggled to identify and discuss; these include taken-for-granted aspects of walking and the feeling of driving a European vehicle. Further investigation of these may require methods that bring the non-conscious into a conscious realm, and that combine that which can and that which cannot be easily represented. Finally, I consider stereotype activation and suppression. I conclude that a range of different theoretical perspectives on conscious and non-conscious influences of social meanings can be useful.

Some authors have assumed that choices influenced by social meanings are not rational. For example, Steg (2005, pp. 148-149) comments that people may be reluctant to talk about the symbolic and affective appeal of vehicles because they "are inclined to justify and rationalise their behaviour". This view assumes that the symbolic and affective elements of vehicle appeal are not rational concerns. Definitions of rationality differ (Hodgson, 2012), but decisions influenced by social meanings can meet common criteria for being rational. Particularly, they can be conscious, consistent decisions, based on tangible, and potentially

measurable outcomes. For example, Dena suspected providers of wedding services might charge her more if they saw her driving a European car. Similarly, Sunny felt that car choices influenced the evaluations of potential clients and so had consequences for the success of her business. In each case, these women made conscious, consistent decisions to avoid the financial repercussions of being associated with negative social meanings. Indeed, participants often described vehicle choices as rational decisions in which the different social meanings associated with different vehicles were weighed and assessed.

Other largely conscious decisions involved health motivations and risk. These influences on practices clearly often existed, for participants, in a conscious, discursive realm. Some participants described consciously spurring themselves into taking healthy actions. David, for example, described "telling myself that yes, I should get more exercise". Descriptions of an injunctive norm against motorcycling highlight how, likewise, participants were consciously aware of risk. For example, Carrie reported that the risks of motorcycling had been "drummed in" by her parents.

Health and risk were described as topics of open discourse and participants had little difficulty describing their own, or others', responses to these topics. This open and easily accessible discourse is probably one of the reasons why risk and health concerns feature strongly in transport literature. These are probably some of the easier social influences on transport practices to investigate through talk-based methods.

Participants also appeared to be guided towards socially acceptable practices by both norms and habitus. One of the differences between norms and habitus is the extent to which a person is aware of their influence. Norms trigger conscious comparative processes while habitus usually remains deeply embedded in non-conscious dispositions (see section 2.3.1).

The data collected contain evidence of participants being influenced both by norms and by habitus. For example, several participants compared the normality of car use to other forms of transport, but most remained unaware of an apparent anti-bus habitus. Norms may be easier to investigate than habitus, and have been the subject of more transport research, but both appear to be important, particularly for transport mode choices.

When participants were aware of social meanings and their influences (such as those associated with risk and health) these were easy to identify in the data collected. Influences of which participants were not aware have been much harder to identify and discuss. Some meanings were barely identified by participants at all. For example, the literature is clear that walking is culturally significant (see section 3.5.1) but walking was largely taken for granted by participants and the influences of "taken-for-grantedness" on walking practices went largely undiscussed. Where social meanings are barely recognised, researchers may need to adopt methods that enhance participant awareness. Diary keeping can enable participants to bring previously unnoticed elements of practices into a conscious and discursive realm. A diary exercise specifically focused on cultures of walking may help participants to recognise different groups of walkers and the meanings with which they are associated.

In other cases, participants appeared to recognise meanings, but to find these difficult to pin down or articulate. For example, Darryl and Basil had some difficulty articulating the appeal of a European car. Their difficulty appeared to stem, at least partly, from a meshing of social meanings and the embodied sensations of driving particular vehicles. The influences here seem to sit on the cusp of discursive and non-discursive realms; accordingly these influences can be recognised but are very difficult to articulate. More-than-representational theorists advocate for the incorporation of both that which can *and* that which cannot easily

be represented in research (Adey, 2010; Lorimer, 2005). Methods combining talk and experience may help participants and researchers to investigate such meshings of factors that are neither entirely in the discursive realm nor entirely outside it.

Finally, in section 2.3.1, I explained that stereotypes may be quickly and unconsciously activated and may be more slowly consciously suppressed. Responses to stereotypes can thus combine both conscious and non-conscious responses. Amelia (FG3) provided some support for this position when she challenged her own assumptions about a particular vehicle: "If a lady was driving it, I would think it was her husband's. Oh that's really bad, really bad, I hate that! Why can't a chick be powerful and drive that car?" We see here an interesting combination of more and less conscious responses to gender stereotypes.

It was clear from focus group discussions that participants were all aware of a large number of stereotypes; it was also clear from the individual exercises that participants consciously chose some quite different responses to those stereotypes. Further research in this area may improve understandings of how stereotypes are activated and supressed, and how they influence transport practices.

Participants in this research provided evidence to suggest that the influences of social meanings can range between an explicit, conscious weighing of meanings, and a non-conscious response that is often harder to define and articulate. This has several important implications for future research. Particularly, it suggests that a range of different theoretical perspectives and methods is necessary to understand the influences of social meanings.

Perhaps more importantly, the analysis that I have presented in this section suggests that different kinds of social meanings work in different ways and are amenable to different

methods. For example, I have suggested that the influences of social meanings associated with risk usually exist in a conscious, discursive realm. In contrast, meanings associated with habitus and with embodied sensations may be harder to identify and to talk about. This research has employed a small cohort in a single city; if future research consistently validates the suggestion that some meanings work through conscious pathways and others do not, then that would significantly progress our understandings of the influence of social meanings. This would especially be the case if the pathways through which meanings work were shown to be the same across different transport modes, for example, if social meanings associated with risk usually have influence through conscious pathways, and those associated with gender, for instance, usually have influence through non-conscious pathways.

7.2.2 Structure and agency

Earlier, I described social meanings as being essentially structural in the context of this research, while also being implicated in recursively evolving social practices. In this section, I want to extend that context slightly by noting one specific way in which concepts of structure and agency enhance understandings of the influence of social meanings. This particularly relates to the direct and indirect structuring roles of social norms.

Direct and indirect structuring influences

Social norms are directly structuring in that they help to reproduce patterns in practices over time. For example, a norm of car use helps encourage and reproduce car use. Social norms are also indirectly structuring in that they encourage the development of physical and social arrangements that help to reproduce transport practices. For example, social norms influence the construction of roads, the development of laws, and the design of cars, all of which have ongoing influences on transport practices. That norms are both

directly and indirectly structuring is not surprising in the context of recursively evolving social practices.

What is more interesting in the context of this thesis is that participants described indirect influences as often being *more structuring* than the norms themselves. By *more structuring*, I mean that other structures may reproduce patterns, and restrict agency, more effectively or completely than the norms that encouraged their development. That is, a person may have more agency to resist norms than to resist the physical and social arrangements that the norms have inspired. A person may have the agency to ignore a social norm of driving, but not have the agency to ignore the legal and infrastructural conditions that prohibit them from cycling on a motorway. Similarly, a person may have the agency to choose bus use when car use would be more normal, but they do not have the agency to choose bus use when there is no bus service. Participants described social norms as encouraging car use, but they described the indirect structures influenced by social norms as encouraging car use much more powerfully. For example, Carrie reflected on the way in which norms had led Christchurch to develop structures that made it difficult for her to travel by bus.

Participants did continue to exercise agency despite structuring influences on their practices. Even though social norms encouraged car use, most participants did also use other modes of transport; some even talked about deriving pleasure from not complying with norms. Similarly, laws exist, but many participants broke laws (including running red lights, speeding, drink driving, biking on footpaths, and other infractions). I therefore do not deny the existence of agency in the context of either the direct or indirect structuring influences of norms. I have, however, observed that participants regarded the indirect structuring

influences of norms as more effectively reproducing car use than the direct influences of the norms themselves.

7.2.3 Social groups

In chapter 2, I explained that the existence of widely shared social meanings requires some degree of social communication and interaction. In this section, I consider how social groups mediate the influence of social meanings; I focus on social norms, participants' negotiation of associations with positive and negative meanings, and different constructions of risk.

Social norms

Participants' transport mode choices were strongly influenced by social norms, and overall, social norms were the kind of social meanings that participants said most influenced their transport mode choices. Particularly, a strong driving norm both encouraged participants to travel by car, and discouraged the use of other modes of transport. Seventy-five percent of trips taken by participants during their RQD exercises were made as either a driver or passenger in a car.

Social norms are group processes in that they are comparisons of practices that are deemed normal and those that are not deemed normal within a certain social group. When participants referred to descriptive, injunctive, or subjective norms, they often included mention of a reference social group. The three examples below show quite different expressions of norms, however, each explicitly specifies the social group in which the norm is active.

> Basil: Today I see myself driving a car…I don't see myself riding a horse, or a bug and carriage to work, you know? And I can't see myself flying to work, although it

> does have its appeals ((laughs))! It's just where we are as a society now, this is how we travel, and I fit into that. I'm not too radical, I'm not going to use penny farthings to go to work, and I'm not going to walk with handstands to work, that eccentricity.
>
> Anna: I think if anything [there's pressure] to drive. Like my friends are all like 'well, why are you getting the bus?', like 'that's weird' type thing, coz I guess they all have cars.
>
> Margaret: If I was in Wellington I would definitely put professionals as using the trains or the buses, because I know professionals in Wellington who do, but I don't know <u>anyone</u> who uses the bus in Christchurch to get to work as a young professional. <u>…</u> But then I was happy to use [the bus] in Dunedin, because Dunedin had, there were professionals who used the bus.

Basil referred to a norm active in general society, Anna referred to a norm amongst her friends, and Margaret referred to different norms for professionals in different cities. Each of these three participants compared what they considered a normal mode of transport in their group, to modes that were considered less normal. Each of these participants described driving as the norm in their social groups. Each also largely adhered to the norm they described; of the 103 journeys that, between them, they made during their diary weeks, 99 were made as either a driver or passenger in a car.

Basford et al. (2002) report that where norms conflict with the practices that we might otherwise choose for ourselves, pressure to behave in the same way as other people often prevails over the individual attitude. Similarly, in this research, some participants reported adhering to social norms, even when other factors might provide them with a preference for

other modes of transport. Several participants explicitly described wanting to drive less, but finding it difficult to do so. In contrast though, other participants reported that social norms did not deter them from using non-car modes of transport. Tanya, for example, reported that she enjoyed walking and would continue to walk even if no-one else did.

Further, some participants actually appeared to derive some pleasure from practices that challenged established norms and identified the participant as different. For example, Amelia talked about the moral high ground of cycling, Ross described valuing the way in which cycling proved that he was not soft, and David described liking to consciously step outside norms by reading books whilst walking. These participants expressed a relatively gentle resistance to norms (compared, for example, with maverick cycle couriers, outlaw bikers, or punks and hippies). Participants demonstrated that norms are powerful group processes, but they do not inspire universal appeal or compliance.

Negotiating association with social meanings

In this section, I consider how participants managed their associations with different group identities. Particularly, I look at how participants performed travel in ways that accentuated or subdued their association with particular social meanings. I draw on theories of emulation and intergroup relations to explore how participants competed with others to maximise their association with positive meanings, and how they communicated with others to minimise their association with negative meanings. First, I look at how participants accentuated positive meanings through competition.

Some participants described performing travel in ways that reinforced their confidence in their own position in a group or hierarchy. Often such performances had an apparently competitive nature. For example, Brendan talked about the “small victories” of

finding better routes through traffic than other car drivers, and David talked about racing other cyclists home from work. The competitive natures of these performances are reminiscent of Veblen's (1899/1934) theory of pecuniary emulation, in which people aspire to move through a progression of hierarchically organised social groups towards those that are associated with more highly regarded meanings. Although the theory of pecuniary emulation refers specifically to progression through wealth-based groups, the same principles can apply equally to groups, or hierarchies, based on cunning navigation or physical fitness.

One of the primary differences between the theory of pecuniary emulation and participants' competitive travel performances revolves around assumptions of conspicuousness. Veblen (1899/1934) constructed competition as being a means to display prowess and gain the respect of others. In contrast, participants suspected that they were often the only ones aware of their victories; often they said they did not think the people they were competing against were even aware of the competition. David even said "I acknowledge it's all about me". Where participants did not intend competition as a display, it may have been more about reinforcing their prowess in their own minds and bodies.[49] It seems that, through competing, participants accentuated their own feeling that they were associated with positive social meanings such as being fit or cunning. The theory of pecuniary emulation might provide a useful starting point for understanding personal competition based on social meanings.

[49] I am less confident than some participants that competitive performances are entirely personal. Most of the regular cyclists in the study, for example, said they race others from time to time. I have also, on a number of occasions, been commuting by bicycle and observed what looks like competition taking place—particularly when groups of cyclists leave traffic lights together. I suspect there is more widespread awareness than commonly acknowledged of speed-based competition between commuting cyclists. That said, competition does largely seem to be about personal feelings of prowess. Future research could investigate this dynamic further.

Most participants had to negotiate associations with negative as well as positive social meanings. I have already mentioned that some participants performed travel in ways intended to minimise these associations. Tracy and Sunny parked their older, battered cars so as to minimise their visibility, Matt cycled courteously to avoid being associated with arrogant cyclists, and Brendan said he would take off his cycle helmet before entering a shop to avoid being seen as a "weirdo".

Participants argued that some negative associations can have tangible consequences, and they described their negotiation of these associations as particularly important. Cyclists (and motorcyclists to a lesser extent) talked about the perceptions of others having repercussions for their personal safety on the roads. One car driver also talked about concerns that the social meanings associated with his car may have consequences for his family's safety. Participants, and especially those who cycled, described trying to manage their associations with negative social meanings to maximise their safety.

Instead of safety implications, car drivers, more commonly, talked about the repercussions of their driving practices for their professional lives. Seven participants talked about experiences of driving vehicles that identified them with their own business, or with a company for which they worked. These participants agreed that they drove more courteously and less aggressively when driving an identifiable business vehicle. It is therefore the case that participants tried to manage or negotiate their associations with negative social meanings to prevent these associations from resulting in more tangible consequences, such as physical or professional harm.

A large body of literature describes individuals' needs for positive self-esteem and the potential for achieving that through membership of certain social groups (Johansson-Stenman

& Martinsson, 2006; Perdue et al., 1990; Simon & Trötschel, 2008; Turner, 1982). Turner (1982, p. 34), writing about intergroup relations, explains that if a group is not viewed positively people will try to change it, leave it, or disassociate themselves from it. It may appear as though doing so would be particularly prudent if physical or professional well-being is at stake. However, this perspective ignores two important aspects of social meanings and transport practices.

First, social meanings are interpreted in different ways by different people. Most groups appear to be associated with negative meanings by some people; European cars, older cars, and small city cars, for example, are all viewed positively by some people and negatively by others. If all groups are viewed negatively by some people it is insufficient to argue that people will attempt to leave groups that are not viewed positively. It is rather more appropriate to argue that whatever groups they are in, people are still very likely to have to negotiate negative social meanings.

Second, transport practices are multiply determined. This is important because it means that it is not always possible, or desirable, to avoid practices that are strongly associated with negative social meanings. If a person finds a transport practice to be practical and enjoyable, they may wish to continue that practice even if it is commonly associated with overwhelmingly negative meanings. For example, a cyclist might be concerned about the implications of negative stereotyping but might continue cycling because they consider the positive aspects of cycling to outweigh the negative meanings. In such cases, it seems that participants often continued pursuing broadly the same practices, while making subtle adjustments to their performances of travel to try to minimise any tangible consequences of negative social meanings. Later, we will see that the theories of intergroup relations are

useful from a methodological perspective, but in terms of how people perform travel their relevance is tempered by multiple determination and multiple interpretations of meanings.

The ways in which participants described influences on their travel performances strongly suggest that participants' travel performances were used to negotiate positions in social groups and hierarchies. Particularly, participants used competitive performances to reinforce their own confidence in their positions in social hierarchies and used subtle adjustments to their performances to manage the repercussions of being in social groups that others viewed negatively.

Different constructions of risk

The literature reviewed in chapter 3 constructs the risks associated with motorcycling and cycling slightly differently. However, in my data, rather than identifying differences between the risks associated with *motorcycling* and *cycling*, I have identified differences in how participants construct the risks associated with *their own practices* compared to the risks associated with *other people's practices*. A more detailed consideration of risk from the perspective of social groups might help to illuminate this difference.

In the research literature, motorcycling risk is sometimes constructed as a result of dangerous riding practices and edgework (see section 3.3.3). Risk is also sometimes considered something that motorcyclists can control through the development and exercise of of skill. In either case, the onus is on motorcyclists to ride safely. This comes as something of a contrast to approaches to the risks of cycling, in that cyclists are more often considered vulnerable victims of an automobility that does not adequately cater to cyclists' needs (see section 3.2.4). Not all literature follows this pattern of course, but the risk associated with motorcycling is primarily described in terms of motorcyclists' behaviours, while the risk

associated with cycling is more often described as the result of conditions beyond cyclists' control.

My data shed a slightly different light on risk, in that they highlight fewer differences between motorcycling and cycling, and more differences between participants' own practices and those of other people. In general, focus group participants described risk as a consequence of the behaviours of both motorcyclists and cyclists. While discussing motorcycling risk they focused on motorcyclists' thrill-seeking practices and potentially dangerous riding behaviours. Similarly, those groups that discussed cycling risk described cyclists as putting themselves at risk through practices such as riding two or more abreast, wearing dark clothes, cycling without paying sufficient attention, and riding on roads with high traffic speeds. In focus groups, participants discussed other people's practices, and primarily constructed risk as a function of those people's behaviours.

When participants came to discussing *their own practices* in the individual exercises, they concentrated much more on conditions beyond their control. This was the case both for cycling and motorcycling, and for users and non-users of each of these two modes. Matt, for example, who used to cycle regularly but had never ridden a motorcycle, took a similar view of both cycling and motorcycling risk. He said that when he was cycling, risk was "completely out of [his] control" and he had "no choice" in a collision situation. He also said he would not ride a motorcycle because of concerns about his vulnerability, especially in the presence of fast-moving traffic. Chris, a motorcyclist, said that motorcyclists have to assume everyone else is out to kill them, and Brendan, Ross, and Bob, all regular cyclists, referenced "luck" in having kept them safe so far. Each of these perspectives assumes risk to be beyond the participants' control.

As with most of the results presented in this thesis, participants' perspectives were varied and nuanced. Not all participants' views aligned with the distinction I have presented here. For example, Ross explained that he did not motorcycle because he feared that he would ride so fast he would kill himself. Ross therefore described his own behaviour as a source of risk. Despite some variation in participant perspectives, there do seem to have been some systematic differences between the ways participants described the risks associated with their own behaviours and with other people's behaviours.

Further work is needed to confirm the different constructions of risk identified here. However, the suggestion that participants constructed other people as putting themselves in risky situations while they, themselves, were vulnerable to situations beyond their control, warrants further investigation. More detailed exploration of this phenomenon using theories of attribution bias, intergroup relations, and potentially even structure and agency could be conducted. Multi-modal studies may be particularly useful for further investigating constructions of risk. This is because multi-modal studies allow consideration of both the modes of transport that a participant does and does not use. This may facilitate clarification of the differences in perceptions between those who do and do not use a given mode, compared to the perceptions of people describing their own or other people's practices.

7.2.4 Section summary

This section has addressed the third research goal of the project; that is, it has considered how key theoretical debates and positions can enhance our understandings of how social meanings influence transport practices. First, I demonstrated that participants were consciously aware of some, but not all, of the influences of social meanings. This means that a number of different theories, from rational choice to habitus, can shed light on how social meanings influence practices. Next, I considered the roles of structure and agency in

participant responses to social meanings. I particularly discussed the indirect structuring roles of social norms. Finally, I considered social meanings and social groups. I concluded that social norms were powerful influences on members of groups but that they did not inspire universal compliance. I also briefly commented on the usefulness of theories of emulation in understanding competitive performances of travel, and on the negotiation of negative meanings in the context of multiply determined practices and multiple interpretations of meanings. Further, I discussed different understandings of the risks associated with motorcycling and cycling, and with participants' understandings of the risks associated with their own, and other people's, practices.

7.3 Methodological Observations

In this final section of the chapter, I draw out two observations that have implications for the choices of methods to be used in future investigations of the influences of social meanings. First, I talk about participants' tendency to focus on positive social meanings more than negative ones. Second, I discuss bringing less consciously recognised influences of social meanings into a discursive realm using diary research.

7.3.1 Prioritising positive meanings

Throughout the research exercises, most participants associated *themselves* more with positive meanings, and *other people* more with negative or indifferent meanings. Participants also described positive meanings as having more influence on their practices than negative ones. There are two possible reasons for participant biases towards positivity. First, meanings can be described in different ways, and participants primarily chose positive representations of their own practices. Second, where meanings associated with a practice were perceived to be negative, its practitioner usually described that practice as being motivated by factors other than social meanings. In the next paragraphs, I explain these two reasons for biases towards

positivity in a little more detail. By extension, I argue that participant representations are likely to underplay the influence of negative social meanings on their practices. I conclude by suggesting some methodological responses to likely positive biases.

Participants focused on positive social meanings. A preference for positive associations connects to a large body of literature around in-group and out-group portrayals, attribution biases, and individuals' need for positive self-esteem (Hewstone & Turner, 2010; Johansson-Stenman & Martinsson, 2006; Perdue et al., 1990; Simon & Trötschel, 2008; Turner, 1982). Other transport researchers have also observed that research participants tend to describe their own transport in positive terms while describing other practices much less favourably (Basford et al., 2002; Daley & Rissel, 2011; Guell & Ogilvie, 2015; Rimano et al., 2015).

Presenting an association with positive meanings is facilitated by the existence of many interconnected meanings. For example, the purchase of a new car can be explained in terms of rejecting the meanings associated with the old car, or embracing the meanings associated with the new. Seeking positive self-esteem, participants more often focused on the positive meanings than the negative, even when both may have been influential.

Where participants associated their practices with primarily negative social meanings they focused on other motivations for those practices. For example, if a participant drove a vehicle they associated with negative social meanings, they usually described its use as motivated by cost, or practicality, or necessity. For example, Brendan made it clear that he felt a level of discomfort with the social meanings associated with his car. He described his car, however, as the result of negotiations with his wife and of needs related to their young family. Thus Brendan appeared very aware of negative social meanings, but did not describe

them as influencing his vehicle choice. Andy's description of his relationship with his Toyota Starlet (which he referred to, usually with a big grin on his face, as "Charlotte the Starlet") also demonstrated a very clear perception of the negative social meanings associated with his car. Andy was also adamant, however, that his personal situation meant these meanings did not influence his decision to keep driving the car. In his interview, I asked Andy whether he felt that his image as a car enthusiast was damaged by Charlotte, he replied:

> Absolutely! Yep ((laughs)). Do you mind an honest answer? 'Yes!' Yes. Am I upset about it? Enough to change? I can't afford to so I just swallow it and take it. But as I said…if things were better in my private life, I would probably have a nicer vehicle than Charlotte. But at the moment, Charlotte is all I can afford, and she'll do.

Both Andy and Brendan neatly demonstrated one of the reasons why positive meanings were described as being more influential than negative ones. Participants described association with negative social meanings as unavoidable side-effects of other circumstances.

In summary, participants described positive social meanings as being more influential than negative ones for two reasons. First, people prefer association with positive meanings and so, in push-pull situations, participants focused more on the pulling than pushing factors. Second, where meanings were overwhelmingly negative, participants focused on the other factors motivating practices. This means that although, in focus groups, participants talked about many negative social meanings, these were overshadowed by positive meanings in individual exercises and were rarely described as influential.

The in-depth nature of this research meant that it was often possible to directly ask participants about negative meanings (as I did when asking Andy about Charlotte the Starlet).

Future research on social meanings will need to either take a similarly in-depth approach, or take steps to mitigate positive biases. Such steps could include specifically asking participants about previous or rejected practices to increase the focus on deterrent meanings or meanings participants have opted to leave behind. They could also include a focus on how participants feel about the social meanings associated with practices primarily motivated by other factors.

7.3.2 Expanding the discursive realm

Elsewhere in this thesis I have argued that non-conscious responses to social meanings may be brought into a discursive realm through encouraging participants to reflect upon their everyday practices (see section 4.3). The RQD exercise required participants to focus on the travel that they did every day, and encouraged them to reflect in detail on the factors influencing that travel. There is considerable evidence in the results to suggest that the method encouraged participants to both notice and analyse elements of their own practices that they had previously not been aware of on a conscious level.[50]

Most participants reported being more aware of their travel than usual while completing the RQD exercise. This, they said, caused them to notice things they did not normally notice and to understand their own travel in new ways. Ross explained that he came to consciously understand his own cycling in a way that had not previously been obvious to him: “It took me about three days [to work out why I bike to work], [my diary is] probably quite different on the third day”. Similarly, Amelia demonstrated that the process of reflection that she had engaged in had led her to draw some new conclusions about the importance of social meanings to her transport practices.

[50] The discussion in this section is an abridged version of an argument developed in more detail in Fitt (2015).

> [The RQD exercise] made me (.) think about what I was doing a lot more, and made me probably come to the conclusion that [how you travel] is an extension of how you see yourself, or the image that you want to portray.

Amelia went on to argue that keeping a diary caused her to notice "all the semi-subconscious thought process[es]" that contribute to transport practices. Basil went a little further, noting that he had engaged in analysis to help him to consciously understand elements of his transport practices:

> Well I wouldn't normally think about the way I was feeling too much when I was driving, because that's just, generally that just sits in your subconscious, it's just sitting there, just something you do every day, and you don't actually sit down there and analyse it, which this was making me do more, I was sitting there and analysing how I was feeling about it, and reflecting on that.

Participants consistently described processes of reflection as enabling them to gain greater insights into their own transport practices. Future research exercises may be able to take advantage of these discoveries to help participants to bring other non-conscious factors in everyday practices into a discursive realm.

Despite numerous examples of the RQD facilitating participant recognition of the influences of social meanings on their transport practices, there is evidence to suggest that some influences of social meanings remained in a non-discursive realm. Methodologists, and especially discourse analysts, sometimes advise that it is appropriate to consider what people do not say in talk-based research alongside what they do say (Fairclough, 1995; Matheson, 2005). It is, for example, only through considering the gaps in discussions around social

meanings and bus use that the suggestion that bus use was simply not considered by participants came to light. Although it may be possible to bring some non-conscious factors into a discursive realm, it seems prudent to advise continuing to look for gaps in data and continuing to use and devise methods that extend beyond discourse where appropriate.

7.3.3 Section summary

In this section, I have drawn out some observations with methodological implications. I have discussed participants' tendency to focus on positive social meanings. Negative meanings can be influential and future research might encourage more discussion of negative meanings through an explicit focus on previous or rejected practices. I have also discussed how diary research might bring some of the less consciously recognised influences of social meanings into a discursive realm. Participants reported that their own understandings of their transport practices changed as a result of their participation in the RQD exercise and it seems likely that the research benefited from richer data as a result.

7.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have moved away from an earlier focus on specific meanings and responses, and towards a focus on overarching issues. Particularly, I've looked at the prevalence and importance of the influences of social meanings, at theoretical insights, and at some observations with methodological implications.

The first part of this chapter focused on the importance and prevalence of influences of social meanings. I demonstrated that most participants described their transport practices as being influenced by social meanings on some level. Although most participants were influenced by social meanings, social meanings may not have been major influences for most participants. This is as expected for multiply determined practices. For most participants, though, social meanings were major influences on their use of at least one mode of transport.

The second part of this chapter reviewed some theoretical and conceptual positions that might be useful in enhancing understandings of the influences of social meanings on everyday transport practices. I demonstrated that the influences of social meanings range from the explicitly conscious to non-conscious responses that were harder to define and articulate. This variety means that a wide range of theoretical arguments can be helpful in enhancing understandings of the influences of social meanings. Further, I highlighted some of the direct and indirect structuring effects of social norms. Finally, I briefly considered some processes relating to social groups. I concluded that norms are powerful group processes, but they do not inspire universal appeal or compliance. I also considered competition and the negotiation of negative social meanings with some reference to theories of emulation and intergroup relations. Further, I described some differences in the ways participants understood the risks associated with their own practices compared to the ways they understood the risks associated with other people's practices.

The third part of this chapter drew out two observations that have implications for the methods chosen for future investigations of the influences of social meanings. First, I explained that participants' focus on positive social meanings requires specific strategies to identify the influences of negatively viewed meanings; and second, I highlighted the value that the RQD method can hold for bringing less conscious influences of social meanings into a discursive realm.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I demonstrate how better understandings of the influences of social meanings can help us to develop more effective transport strategies. Presenting fully developed plans for changes to transport strategies is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, my goal is to make suggestions that demonstrate the scope and potential effectiveness of using understandings of social meanings to develop strategies that improve experiences and impacts of transport practices.

There is considerable academic and policy interest in improving the health, social, and environmental impacts of transport. Our transport systems are fundamental to the way we live, but they are also associated with problematic impacts including environmental damage, collisions, noise, congestion, social dislocation, poor community cohesion, stress, and sedentarism (see section 1.1). Strategies that allow people to make good use of the remarkable capabilities of the transport available to them, while also minimising their transport's negative impacts, have potential to be extremely beneficial. One of the advantages of understanding social meanings is that it may be possible to use such understandings to encourage practices with many benefits and few drawbacks. It may be possible to do this without resorting to politically unpopular strategies such as restrictions on car use.

This research suggests that transport strategies could leverage understandings of the influences of social meanings to sway mode choices, vehicle choices, and performances of travel. Influencing the mode used for travel can change that travel's health, social, and environmental impacts. For example, successfully encouraging community members to switch from driving short distances to walking could improve their physical fitness, community cohesion, and local air quality. Influencing vehicle choices could have significant

impacts on the vehicle fleet in terms of safety, noise, and pollution. Influencing travel performances could enable users of different modes to coexist more harmoniously in shared road space and could therefore result in lowered stress levels and reduced numbers of collisions. In this chapter, I highlight some ways in which understanding social meanings might facilitate the development of strategies that would lead to these kinds of benefits.

Conceptual understandings of how people respond to social meanings will be crucial if we are to optimise the use of the knowledge we now have about social meanings and transport. For example, if influences on bus use operate on a non-conscious level (in a way that resonates with descriptions of habitus as deeply embedded socialisation) then there is little point in appealing to an individual's rational decision-making capability to try to encourage a change in transport mode. As this chapter proceeds, I demonstrate how conceptual understandings can facilitate effective strategy development.

This research has focused on Christchurch, New Zealand, but has much wider relevance. First, and perhaps most importantly, this research demonstrates that it is both possible and useful to investigate the influences of social meanings in considerable depth and breadth. Similar methods of investigation could be used elsewhere, and may be particularly useful where problematic transport practices have proved to be intractable. For example, where tensions between users of different transport modes persist, and separating the different modes using changes to infrastructure is not feasible.

Second, there is considerable consistency around the meanings that are associated with transport in different contexts. This research has been unusually comprehensive both in terms of the number of transport modes considered and the number of social meanings explored. However, participants often broadly agreed with existing literature about the

meanings that are associated with different transport practices. For example, motorcycling was widely connected to rebellion; cycling to meanings associated with fitness, Lycra, expensive bicycles, and rule breaking; bus use to a lack of other options; and driving to much higher, but evolving notions of status; participants and literature even agreed that walking is taken for granted and often barely noticed. This research has considered the influences of these social meanings on participants' everyday transport practices, some of the results mirror those in existing literature, and it is likely that more extensive research would find further parallels. There are some differences between Christchurch and other contexts, however. For example, research in London has noted that car use is becoming morally dubious (Green et al., 2012); there is no evidence, as yet, of that trend being followed in Christchurch. Future research will undoubtedly shed more light on the similarities and differences between Christchurch and other contexts, but current indications are that the findings of this research are likely to be applicable beyond Christchurch and New Zealand.

In section 3.6, I drew attention to the fact that the vast majority of the literature reviewed in this thesis has been undertaken in developed contexts in Europe, North America, and Australasia. I described this bias as somewhat beneficial for my own research purposes as Christchurch closely resembles many of the sites of previous research. In return, the similarities between Christchurch and the sites of previous research increase the chances that this research contains findings that could be applied back to those contexts. Again, this has its advantages. However, I maintain that these similarities may obscure some more significant differences between more diverse contexts. The applicability of my findings to Asian, or African, or South American contexts may not be as high. Although this perhaps imposes limits to the generalizability of this work, I find it exciting to know that there is much left to

discover and am confident that understandings of transport in Christchurch would be enhanced by the findings of more diverse studies.

This chapter contains five mode-based sections, each demonstrating how one of the findings of this research could be used to inform transport strategies. I discuss how we might be able to use transport strategies to propel Christchurch towards a more fuel efficient vehicle fleet, and to encourage greater uptake of cycling. I also elaborate on how we might learn more about motorcycling's connections to risk, escape, and well-being, how we might counter an anti-bus habitus, and how we might make walking seem more normal by concentrating walkers in attractive walking corridors. I conclude the chapter with a section on the cross-modal influences of social meanings, and particularly with some suggestions about how to improve interactions between the users of different modes of transport in shared road space.

In the context of this research, I have viewed social meanings as being a primarily structural influence on transport practices. This is because of the consistency and longevity of social meanings and the low likelihood of participants having the agency to influence social meanings within the period of the research. Now though, it is important to recognise the potential for social meanings to change over a longer term. Meanings can, and do, change over time, and deliberate strategies and policies can contribute to their adjustment (Shove et al., 2012). In this chapter then, I treat meanings as less structurally stable than my treatment elsewhere in the thesis. Instead, I allow more scope for various kinds of agency—whether public, private, individual, or institutional—to influence social meanings.

8.1 Driving

There is a vast array of social meanings associated with driving and with different cars; these meanings influence transport practices in a variety of ways. In particular, in Christchurch, there is a strong social norm of driving that discourages the use of other modes of transport. Further, the many social meanings associated with different vehicles influence vehicle choices. For example, small city cars are primarily associated with women, and female participants were much more likely to choose these than male participants. Other meanings had more nuanced influences, as evidenced by reports that some participants preferred to drive European vehicles while others rejected these.

In most of the other mode-based sections in this chapter, I describe strategies for encouraging the use of that mode. Developing strategies to encourage car use is unnecessary as norms already encourage car use and car use is prevalent in Christchurch. Indeed, much transport literature calls instead for a reduction in car use. It is, however, difficult to see ways to directly encourage reductions in car use using the social meanings identified in this thesis. Participants did not see car use as "inherently morally dubious", as one study has argued is the case in London (Green et al., 2012, p. 277), and there was little evidence, for example, of environmental concerns influencing driving practices. Other sections in this chapter suggest strategies that may indirectly reduce car use through encouraging the use of other transport modes. Here, however, I focus on strategies relating to aspects of driving other than mode choice. The benefits of car use are many (Shaw & Docherty, 2014b), and although I firmly believe that reducing car use could have significant benefits—particularly in terms of the impacts of transport systems on the environment and liveability of urban areas—I also see a continued place in Christchurch for cars. It is relevant then to consider how social meanings could be used to improve the experience or impacts of driving.

Social meanings associated with driving have considerable influence on vehicle choices. It may therefore be possible to capitalise on existing social meanings to influence the composition of the vehicle fleet. There may, for example, be potential to encourage Christchurch residents to drive smaller, more fuel efficient, vehicles and thus reduce the environmental and health impacts of driving. At the moment, men drive more than women (Ministry of Transport, 2015b) and my research suggests that men wholeheartedly reject being associated with the meanings connected to small city cars (which may be amongst the more fuel efficient vehicles generally available). Attempts to encourage men to drive efficient cars are likely to be unsuccessful if the efficient cars that are available are associated with social meanings with which men dislike being associated.

Stokes and Hallett (1992, p. 181) suggested that increasing sensitivity to environmental concerns would be sufficient to counter the "macho competitive element" of car choice. More than 20 years after Stokes and Hallett's article, that has not happened in Christchurch and something more is needed. Social marketing and public policies that encourage the development of a market for highly efficient vehicles that are not associated with gendered meanings that are unappealing to men could be successful. Several car manufacturers have begun producing such cars. Lotus' Eco Elise may be an early example of attempts towards making vehicles with improved environmental credentials aspirational even for car enthusiasts (BBC Top Gear, n.d.; Lotus, 2015; Pulman, 2008; Stock, 2008). Similarly, Tesla is producing electric vehicles that the company itself describes as "exhilarating" and "ludicrously fast", which are not words commonly associated with small city cars (Tesla Motors, 2015a, 2015b). The Mitsubishi Outlander is also currently proving to be popular in the hybrid market in New Zealand (Ministry of Transport, 2015c).

A graduated licensing fee structure for vehicles with different efficiency ratings may be an effective tool to help encourage the uptake of these kinds of vehicles (and potentially cheaper equivalents). Reducing on-road costs of vehicles in this way would have to be carefully researched, designed, and monitored to avoid promoting an association between efficient vehicles and low wealth-based status. It may also be possible for local governments or interest groups to raise the profile of efficient vehicles that might appeal to men by holding public events such as races or displays. However, public policies encouraging men to purchase "ludicrously fast" cars would need to be carefully designed and monitored to ensure they did not condone dangerous speeding on public roads (May et al., 2008; Tranter & Lowes, 2007; Tranter & Warn, 2008).

Here I have suggested just one way that understanding social meanings could help to improve driving practices in some way. That is in promoting the development of a more efficient vehicle fleet through deliberately promoting efficient vehicles to men. There are so many social meanings associated with driving and with cars that it seems likely that other applications could be derived from further investigations of these.

8.2 Cycling

As with driving, there is an array of social meanings associated with cycling and influencing cycling practices. Two of the most clearly influential sets of meanings associated with cycling are those around social norms and road cycling. With regard to norms, both literature and the participants in this research often (although not always) described cycling as unusual and cyclists as othered (see sections 3.2.1 and 6.3.1). Although some participants took pleasure from challenging norms, others were deterred from cycling by these. Participants also described social meanings associated with road cycling as being largely unappealing. These meanings include themes around fitness, Lycra, expensive bicycles,

coffee, imitation, arrogance, and rule breaking behaviour. These themes are all interconnected and appear to be symbolic of wealthy, middle-class lifestyles and a false sense of superiority and entitlement.

Increasing the numbers of people cycling is often described as having benefits with respect to the environment, population health, congestion, the liveability of cities, cyclist safety, and more (Aldred, 2010; Dickinson & Robbins, 2009; Heinen et al., 2010; Kingham et al., 2011; Loo, 2009; Ogilvie, Egan, Hamilton, & Petticrew, 2004; Pooley et al., 2013; Pucher & Buehler, 2012). Here, then, I want to pay some attention to strategies to reduce the deterrent to cycling posed by social meanings, and particularly those meanings associated with road cycling and with cycling not being normal.

Making cycling more normal could reduce cycling's connection with negative meanings. Pooley et al. argue for the homogenisation of cycling to make cycling more normal:

> It can be argued that any association of cycling with particular groups or values could be detrimental to the wider adoption of cycling as an activity. The great advantage that car use has is that it offers almost universal appeal and is not associated with particular segments of society. …If cycling is an activity that becomes associated with certain values, fashions or groups it is likely to repel others (as is arguably the case already). To achieve high levels of cycle use in Britain it is necessary for cycling to be as homogenous and all-embracing as is currently the case for cars. (2013, p. 166)

The point raised here is a very valid one; specifically that activities that have niche appeal may struggle to attain wide uptake. However, as I have shown, driving is not at all

homogenous. Rather, the very different forms of driving that exist *between them* enlist almost the entire adult population. This implies that diversity, rather than homogeneity, is a sign of normalcy and maturity in mode use. With that in mind, it would make sense to increase rather than decrease the range of cycling practices pursued, in an attempt to present variations that, between them, can enlist a much wider cohort of participants than can a single homogenous mode.

I propose that there is a need to normalise cycling as a collection of many different forms. Beneficial strategies might include efforts to ensure that the social meanings associated with different types of cycling actually become more distinct, and less prone to "contaminating" one another (Fincham, 2007, p. 184). Cycling in Christchurch is strongly associated with a very specific perception of road cycling, despite the many other variants that exist. This kind of road cycling appeals to some individuals but not to others. Ensuring that road cycling was viewed as just one type of cycling amongst many, might reduce the dominance of social meanings associated with road cycling over all other variants. This could broaden the appeal of cycling, and encourage an acceptance that stereotypes of road cyclists exist (as do stereotypes of SUV drivers, bogans, and nanas) but do not apply to all bicycle riders.

Several different approaches could contribute to the diversification of the image of cycling. First, I would strongly argue against a regularly proposed legal requirement that cyclists wear hi-visibility clothing (O'Callaghan, 2013; Sellwood, 2014). The effect of homogenising the appearance of cyclists seems likely to further narrow the appeal of

cycling.[51] Second, I would recommend strategies that use the provision of different kinds of infrastructure to promote both a diversity of cycling and an awareness of that diversity. Bicycle racks that accommodate a wide range of bicycle types, alongside cycle lanes, paths, and on-road features that accommodate a range of riding styles and purposes should help to facilitate increases in the diversity of cycling. Signage and promotion of those facilities could emphasise that diversity.

The Frocks on Bikes campaign (Frocks on Bikes, 2015, n.d.) is notable for its attempt to divert perceptions of cycling away from some of the social meanings commonly associated with road cycling, and particularly with Lycra. This is a valuable initiative. I have collected some anecdotal evidence suggesting that there is pressure on cyclists who do wear Lycra not to do so because of its association with negative social meanings and its contamination of the image of cycling more generally. Such pressure seems more likely to make Lycra-wearing cyclists aware of negative social meanings and deter them from cycling than to contribute to cycling diversity. I argue that Lycra, and frocks both have their place and neither should be discouraged. Support for Frocks on Bikes, and other similar initiatives, may be able to help diversify the image of cycling and so allow cycling to enlist a wider range of users.

8.3 Motorcycling

Motorcycling currently accounts for only a small proportion of transport trips and, compared to walking, cycling, and bus use there have been few campaigns to increase rates of motorcycling. Motorcycling can, however, have some benefits over other modes of transport. For example, motorcycles require less parking and road space than cars and may contribute less to congestion (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Jderu, 2015; Robertson, 2002).

[51] I would also argue that such a requirement would strengthen perceptions that cycling is dangerous, and would further deter people from cycling.

Motorcycling may also (depending on riding style) require less physical effort than cycling, provide faster travel than cycling or walking, and allow more independence from fixed routes and schedules than public transport. Motorcycling is also currently part of the transport mix of most cities, including Christchurch, and so there is value in contributing to strategies that have the potential to improve the experiences and impacts of motorcycling.

A small and narrow volume of literature, coupled with a very small cohort of motorcyclists in my study, mean that it is appropriate here to signal opportunities for further research, rather than making strategy recommendations. Motorcycling is particularly associated with social meanings around risk and escape. These two themes are clearly present both in literature discussing motorcycling and in the data collected in this research. I have described some of the ways in which these meanings influence transport practices but there may be other influences that warrant further research. In particular, there is some (albeit limited) evidence in my data and in literature that motorcycling is more closely associated with well-being than are other modes of transport (Bellaby & Lawrenson, 2001; Fitt, 2014a; Jderu, 2015). A critical question is whether and how social meanings around risk and escape contribute to the mechanism through which motorcycling leads to well-being.

Motorcycling might generate well-being in several different ways. One possibility is that motorcycling leads to well-being through a mechanism of flow and a sense of escape. Existing research has demonstrated that motorcycling is an intensely affective and embodied activity (Musselwhite et al., 2012), and that riders commonly experience *flow*, or a sense of being so intensely in the moment that other concerns are forgotten (Chen & Chen, 2011). This sense of intense focus carries a resemblance to well-being strategies of mindfulness (LaJeunesse & Rodríguez, 2012). The few riders in my study appeared to support the idea of

intense focus, describing the enjoyment of motorcycling as highly sensual and as providing a feeling of escape through total absorption in the moment. Chris, I suspect without realising it, demonstrated the embodied absorption of motorcycling when he swayed from side to side in his seat while describing to me the joy of motorcycling around tight bends. If motorcycling can promote intense focus, mindfulness, and well-being then motorcycling could have notable benefits, especially as an antidote to the stress often associated with travel, and particularly with commuting (Bissell, 2015; LaJeunesse & Rodríguez, 2012). In this case, reducing perceptions that motorcycling is risky could increase the numbers of people motorcycling, and have widespread well-being benefits.

A second possibility, however, is that motorcycling generates intense focus because perceptions of motorcycling emphasise risk. In particular, if motorcyclists feel responsible for their own safety, or that they need to engage in practices of self-defence to mitigate the dangers inherent in a risky environment, it would make sense for them to focus considerable personal resources on staying safe. Here, social meanings may contribute to understandings of risk; understandings of risk may then contribute to a sense of focus; and a sense of focus may facilitate well-being. The end result, as above, is that motorcycling generates well-being (assuming attempts to stay safe are successful). In this case, though, reducing perceptions that motorcycling is risky could reduce the sense of focus and well-being that motorcyclists feel. This may actually make motorcycling less popular and less beneficial for those who motorcycle.[52]

[52] Of course, it is important to remember that any strategies to reduce *perceptions* of the risks associated with motorcycling may change the *actual* risks of motorcycling. As a result such strategies may have positive or negative benefits beyond their implications for the kind of well-being I have discussed here.

That usually non-risky activities like jogging and computer gaming have been associated with flow and escape, provides some hope that a similar connection could be available for motorcycling (Cook et al., 2015; McGonigal, 2011). Further research would be needed, however, to establish whether the same mechanisms lead to flow and a sense of escape in these different activities.

8.4 Bus use

Increasing the proportion of travel undertaken by public transport is widely argued to have a range of benefits both for bus users and wider society. Particularly, public transport use can reduce some of the negative repercussions of high volumes of private motorised traffic, including in terms of emissions, congestion, and community cohesion (Beirão & Sarsfield Cabral, 2007; Collins & Shantz, 2009; Guiver, 2007; Shaw & Docherty, 2014b). Other advantages to increasing public transport use might include reductions in driver stress and the promotion of physical activity (as walking is commonly used to link public transport stops with specific destinations). Increasing public transport use might also result in the provision of more frequent and wide ranging services, which would have benefits in terms of facilitating mobility for those with constraints on their use of individual transport modes. Public transport constitutes around 3% of all trip legs for travel in New Zealand, and just over 2% of all trips in Christchurch (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy Partners, 2009; Ministry of Transport, 2015a). Public transport in Christchurch primarily consists of bus use; increasing the currently low rate of bus use may have considerable benefits for residents.

Participants associated bus use with some positive social meanings, but more commonly and consistently buses were described as a stigmatised, low status mode of transport for people with no other options. Although participants commonly argued that

negative social meanings did not influence their bus use, there is some evidence to suggest that a deeply embedded habitus led to participants not considering buses to be an appropriate option for travel. The challenge to increase bus use then, seems to lie not directly in the question of whether buses are popularly derided as loser cruisers (as suggested by Tony Moore's quote in the opening paragraphs of this thesis), but more indirectly in strategies to counter an anti-bus habitus. Such strategies would need to do two discrete jobs. First, they would need to prompt individuals to consciously consider bus use, bringing the rejection from an unconscious realm, to a conscious one that might be challenged. Second, they would need to ensure that, when consciously considered, bus use compared favourably to other available transport modes.

First then, we would need strategies to encourage a conscious consideration of bus use. People sometimes change their transport practices in response to life events (such as having children, changing job, or moving house), or in response to changes in the transport context (such as variations in bus routes and frequencies, ticket or fuel prices, or congestion levels) (Chatterjee et al., 2013; Gatersleben, 2012; Guell et al., 2012; Pooley et al., 2013; Schwanen & Lucas, 2011). However, such changes are unlikely to result in bus use for people like Margaret, who said using the bus "never enters my head as an option". What is needed is a strategy to encourage Margaret, and others like her, to include bus use amongst the transport alternatives they consciously consider.

In this research, extended reflection as part of a diary exercise and direct challenging from an interviewer were used to help participants become more consciously aware of their practices. These activities were only partially successful in the context of bus use; some participants began to consciously consider bus use but others did not. Such time-intensive

strategies would not be practical to encourage the consideration of bus use on a larger scale. There is, however, some international precedent for using social marketing to challenge people to consciously reflect on otherwise unchallenged assumptions. For example, the UK Commission for Racial Equality[53] used a highly controversial set of adverts to try to challenge racial stereotypes. One set of adverts appeared to condone racism, a later set berated its audience for not making complaints about the adverts (Thorpe, 2011). Such approaches need to be used with extreme caution to ensure that they do not reinforce undesirable stereotypes or offend social sensibilities (as the UK adverts did). However, it may be possible, with additional research, to devise a social marketing strategy that caused people to challenge their own designation of the bus as a non-option for travel.

Alongside ensuring that bus travel is considered to be an option, it must compare favourably to other available options if it is to be chosen. Comparisons are likely to extend beyond social meanings and into the multiple factors that influence transport practices, including instrumental factors, affect, and embodiment. That said, comparisons in terms of social meanings are likely to be made. Strategies that emphasise the normality of catching a bus, or even celebrity endorsements of public transport may be beneficial. Various marketing campaigns have attempted to make public transport aspirational over at least the last 40 years (see for example Midttrafik, Falkenberg, & M2Film, 2012; Montreal Metro, 1976). Further research could investigate the efficacy of these attempts with the end goal of providing guidance for marketing in Christchurch.

A marketing focus on positive social meanings could be helpful. Capitalising on existing meanings may be easier than making entirely new connections. Unfortunately, this

[53] Now part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

research revealed few consistent, widely shared, positive meanings associated with bus use, meaning there is little on which to build a campaign with wide appeal. However, one participant (and several anecdotal conversations) suggested that having a functioning public transport system was a vital part of a successful, liveable city. A recent cycling advocacy campaign in London used a sense of community identity to attract supporters (Aldred, 2013b). It is possible that a focus on rebuilding Christchurch as a liveable city might provide an anchor for associating bus use with positive, community-focused meanings. Promoting buses using community identity may have the added advantage of creating a sense of in-group affiliation with bus use for members of the Christchurch community. In-group affiliation may, in turn, lead to increasingly positive evaluations of bus services.

Alongside marketing existing bus services, it may be possible to change the services themselves to associate them with more positive social meanings. Making bus services free or very cheap can reduce the stigma widely associated with using buses (Goodman et al., 2013; Green et al., 2014). The price change in itself does not reduce stigma;[54] rather, a drastic price reduction allows buses to compete very effectively with other modes of transport. If buses become popular their association with a low status demographic dissolves and a developing social norm erodes stigma. This idea is sound as long as the reduction in prices can be effectively communicated to people who do not normally consider bus use, as long as the cheap price offsets any other differences between the competing modes, and as long as the service funders can afford to run the buses at a heavily subsidised price—especially during the lag between price reduction and the creation of a social norm and erosion of stigma.

[54] Although making bus use free may trigger a psychological response in its own right as people often seek to maximise their use of anything free (Andrews et al., 2012).

Rather than attempting to change the social meanings associated with existing bus services, an alternative may be to create new bus services that are connected to very different social meanings. This is a contributing logic behind the development of high quality, high priced, luxury bus services that are often explicitly marketed to working professionals (Jaffe, 2014; Jain, 2011; Leap Transit, n.d.). These services often appeal to meanings associated with wealth (partly through commanding a premium price), individualism (through offering larger seats that are isolated from one another), professionalism (through providing Wi-Fi connections and the ability to work on the move), and even middle or upper class food and beverage consumption habits (through offering gin and tonic, organic juices and premium snacks) (Jain, 2011). Developing new services may be quicker and easier than associating new social meanings with existing services.[55] In addition, offering a new service avoids the need to challenge or manipulate existing habitus; a new service can simply be appropriate in ways that an old one was not.

There are, however, downsides to the development of premium or luxury bus services that run in parallel with pre-existing services. These include the likely creation of a two-tiered system with dubious consequences in terms of social equity, efficiency, and the sustainability of the lower tier service (Huet, 2013; Jaffe, 2014). Such downsides lead me to be sceptical that premium bus services would result in overall improvements to bus travel in Christchurch. However, if patronage of existing services could be increased (using social marketing for example) service providers may choose to use increased revenue (including from economies of scale and buses running at closer to capacity loading) to introduce some of the same

[55] However, Leap Transit, one such service provider, existed only briefly, experienced regulatory problems and resistance to the use of public bus stops, and filed for bankruptcy in 2015 (Fitzgerald Rodriguez, 2015; Huet, 2013). It may, therefore, not always be quicker and easier to establish new services than to change existing meanings.

features enjoyed by patrons of premium services, such as the provision of Wi-Fi, newspapers, and different seating configurations. Bus stops and interchanges could also increasingly feature the provision of services appealing to higher socio-economic groups, such as bars and cafes, drycleaners, and organic produce stores.

In summary, increasing bus use in Christchurch is not a simple matter. Here, I have attempted to suggest ways in which the impediments to bus use posed by social meanings could be tackled, but this is a challenging issue. The possibility of bus use needs to be brought into a conscious realm for potential patrons. It might be possible to do this through social marketing that poses a direct challenge to potential bus users, but such strategies can be risky and would require further research. When consciously considered, bus use then needs to compare positively with other transport modes. Marketing positive meanings around bus use might help, but positive meanings are diverse and lack the consistency that might be needed for a campaign with wide appeal. Promoting community identity may lead to more positive associations with bus use, but it is one thing for people to say they support the provision of bus services and another for them to actually use buses. Drastic ticket price reductions may lead to a norm of bus use, but that is an expensive strategy. The challenges to increasing bus use are significant, but understanding an anti-bus habitus and how it may influence the kinds of strategies that might be successful is hopefully a first step towards dealing with the impediments that social meanings present for bus use.

8.5 Walking

Research participants described few social meanings associated with walking, and few influences of social meanings on walking practices. Walking was, however, described as simultaneously both normal, and not normal. Walking was considered to be a normal ability and a normal leisure activity, but the normality of walking for transport was considerably less

clear, perhaps because although most participants did walk for transport few of them saw other people doing so. Walking was also constructed as a healthy activity and a way to avoid obesity.

Walking has numerous benefits as a mode of transport. It is probably the most environmentally friendly transport mode that exists (Loo, 2009). Walking also has health benefits, and benefits for the liveability and social connectedness of urban environments (Appleyard, 1983; Luke & Cooper, 2013). Of course walking also has its disadvantages compared to other modes; particularly it is slow, usually not used for long distances, and involves exposure to weather. Strategies to improve experiences and impacts of walking are most likely to focus on encouraging individuals to walk short distances, during clement weather, to capitalise on the environmental, health, and social benefits of walking.

From the perspective of social meanings, the first step in encouraging walking must be to continue to investigate the ways in which walking is taken-for-granted and to recognise the considerable diversity in walking practices and the meanings associated with these. There is relatively little literature to date that recognises the social and cultural significances of walking, and if walking is to be better understood, and potentially improved, this needs to change. Given participants' own difficulties in recognising the significance of their own walking, strategies that rely less on participant talk may prove fruitful; these strategies might include comparative ethnographies of different groups of walkers and non-walkers.

I have argued that walking appears more normal when pedestrians are concentrated in areas where they can see one another. This warrants further research, but also leads me to suggest several possibilities for generating a more visible walking norm. It may, for example, be possible to create attractive walking corridors that focus pedestrians in particular locations

to give them more appearance of critical mass. Designated walking routes between inner suburbs and business districts, or "park-and-walk" facilities that locate parking a short distance from popular destinations, may help to make walking more visible. Infrastructure expenditure could be targeted towards focus corridors, which could feature wide footpaths and signage designed specifically for pedestrians. In addition to focusing walkers on particular routes to increase visibility, these features may serve to send out a subtle message that walking is valued and appropriate in the urban landscape. Such corridors could (where possible without decreasing directness) incorporate popular walking environments such as parks and waterways. They could also feature coffee carts, fresh produce stalls, and special events such as Christmas markets or fundraising sausage sizzles.

A beneficial side-effect of creating walking corridors may be to increase the perceived safety of walking. Few participants in this research expressed safety concerns, but safety has been highlighted as an issue for walkers elsewhere (Kusenbach, 2003; Law, 1999). Safety could be further enhanced with the use of innovative lighting solutions such as Starpath, which is a bioluminescent material used to coat footpaths and which glows more brightly the darker the ambient conditions (Vincent, 2013).

Additional research that would be useful in a walking context includes research on how to extend walking norms beyond walking corridors, and whether increased encounters between walkers results in the development of more widely shared social meanings associated with walking.

8.6 Cross-modal influences and strategies

Throughout this thesis, I have predominantly discussed the different transport modes in mode-based sections. This structuring device has facilitated a comprehensible and

comprehensive review of a wide array of social meanings and their implications. It may, however, have distracted attention away from the coexistence of the different modes and from the existence and influence of social meanings across modal boundaries. In this section, I therefore want to draw attention to some of the ways that meanings and their influences cross modal boundaries. Particularly, I want to demonstrate that understandings of social meanings could be used to develop strategies to improve not just the experiences and impacts of individual modes, but also the nature of interactions between the users of different modes of transport.

First, I want to highlight some of the social meanings that have, up to this point, been primarily discussed in mode based sections, but which in a more complex reading can be seen to extend across multiple transport modes. The most obvious and significant cross-modal group of social meanings is norms. I have described a norm of car use as encouraging driving and discouraging the use of other transport modes. It is possible to identify the influences of norms on any single transport practice, but the comparative nature of norms means it is also possible to view norms as connecting different practices in relationships of relative normality. A choice to use a more normal mode of transport is simultaneously a choice not to use a less normal mode. The choice can be described from either perspective, but describing it from both presents a more holistic picture. In chapter 6, I described the influences of norms on driving practices, arguing that norms encouraged driving and mild teasing discouraged the use of other modes (section 6.2). I also described small group norms as providing some support for cycling, and described an interesting twist in which some participants were motivated to resist norms to present an image of toughness (section 6.3.1). I went on to suggest that normative misperception made utility walking appear less normal than it actually was (section 6.6.2). Although each of these sections presented a different perspective on

norms, it is clear that the norms themselves are not constrained to describing or influencing any particular transport mode.

Following a similar logic to the last paragraph, any mode choice necessarily has multi-modal implications. Choosing to make a journey by motorcycle is not only a choice to use a motorcycle, but also a choice *not* to use any other available modes. Accordingly, any meaning that deters or encourages the use of a particular mode has implications for other modes. Often, social meanings that appear tied to one mode of transport are also linked, by opposition, to meanings associated with other modes. For example, social meanings that associate cars with status are very clearly opposed to those that describe buses as the last resort for those who have no other options, and particularly for those who cannot drive. Similarly, but less obviously, social meanings associating motorcycling with escape include a tacit opposition to the "confinement" of other vehicles, as explained neatly by Schouten and McAlexander (1995, p. 52): "[Harley-Davidson motorcycles are] the antithesis of all the sources of confinement (including *cars*, offices, schedules, authority, and relationships) that may characterize [the riders'] various working and family situations" (emphasis added). Thus, where they encourage the use of one transport mode, and discourage the use of another, social meanings often have influences on the use of more than one mode.

Not all social meanings compare modes or work in opposition to one another. Some meanings influence different modal practices in very similar ways. For example, I described an expected relationship between age and wealth influencing participants' perceptions of the likely owners of sports cars (section 5.1.6), expensive bicycles (section 5.2.2), and different kinds of motorcycles (section 5.3.2). I have also already discussed some of the similarities and differences between perceptions of the risks of motorcycling and cycling.

There is scope for considerable additional work investigating the linkages between different social meanings and their influences. That work is beyond the scope of this thesis, but would have significant potential to further inform the development of strategies that could be used to improve experiences and impacts of transport practices. For now, I wish to move on to several multi-modal recommendations that *can* be drawn from my work; I focus here on improving interactions between different road users.

I have already suggested that participants in this research distinguished between their own ability to avoid or manage risk, compared to other people's abilities to do the same. Participants described themselves as trying to avoid or manage inherently risky situations, and described other people as foolishly putting themselves into risky situations (see section 7.2.2). This dynamic has several likely repercussions. First, people may not be very tolerant, or may even be aggressive, towards those who they see as having deliberately put themselves at risk by using a certain transport mode. Second, users of that transport mode will construct others as being the source of risk and themselves as trying to mitigate that risk. This seems likely to lead to conflict, and indeed offers a plausible explanation for some tensions between different road users (see for example Conway, 2010). Understanding this dynamic may help with the development of strategies to reduce tension and conflict.

Road user training programmes may be able to help with reducing tension and conflict. Especially, programmes that train people in the use of several different modes of transport (for example, cycling, motorcycling, car driving, and truck driving) might be able to help their students to more consistently judge the risks they take compared to the risks others take. This might lead to more tolerance of other road users and more consistent expectations of the responsibilities borne by different mode users on the roads. Successful precedent for

this kind of training has already been established by a programme bringing together cyclists and truck drivers (NZ Transport Agency, 2015). A further extension could see such training being rolled out as a compulsory part of driver and motorcyclist licencing programmes or as part of road safety education in schools.

Extending the idea of road user training a little, road users are currently usually trained in one specific mode of transport (for example through driving lessons). It seems likely that people would develop quite different understandings of the risks and responsibilities associated with different modes if they experienced more wide-ranging road user training. Road use is a skill fundamental for contemporary life in New Zealand (whether as a driver, cyclist, motorcyclist, or pedestrian), so it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that wide-ranging road user education could usefully be added to the high-school curriculum. Doing so would require some significant changes in the way we think about road user training, and would require budgetary changes. Further research could establish whether such a strategy would have sufficient gains in terms of road safety to make these changes worthwhile.

Further research is also needed to assess the influence of stereotypes on road user interactions. Road users often have to interact with one another under time pressure. For example, a driver rounds a bend in the road and sees a cyclist ahead. The driver may decide in a split second whether to overtake and how much space to give the cyclist. Research on stereotype activation and suppression should cause us to question whether stereotypes of cyclists may, in that split second, have an influence on the driver's decisions (Devine, 1989).

Focus group participants demonstrated that they were aware of a large number of stereotypes associated with different transport practices. Often they did not agree with those

stereotypes and did not consider those stereotypes to influence their own practices. However, research suggests that simply being aware of a stereotype can influence a person's judgements (Devine, 1989). People most frequently stereotype individuals and groups that they do not know personally (see section 2.2.1). This means both that transport stereotypes are likely to be most prominent between people with different practices, and that getting to know road users with different practices is likely to lead to a reduction in stereotyping.

Strategies that encourage personal interaction between people who travel differently may help to reduce some of the distinctions between mode user groups and facilitate more harmonious relations. Particularly, it has been demonstrated that emphasising *cross-categorisation* can help reduce intergroup distinctions and attribution biases (Hewstone & Turner, 2010). That is, emphasising that two people may be in each other's out-groups in terms of transport mode, but are in other in-groups because they live in the same street, travel at the same time, and work in similar jobs may help to reduce negative attributions. Campaigns like the New Zealand Transport Agency's "Drive Social" campaign (Clemenger BBDO, 2013), which encourages people to recognise the other humans with whom they share the roads, may be beneficial here. The Drive Social campaign has encountered some criticism for its high cost and for failing to recognise modes of transport other than driving (Polkinghorne, 2013; Sabin, 2013). However, the principle of increasing tolerance through emphasising the shared characteristics of road users and reducing stereotyping and attribution biases may well be sound.

I began this section by drawing attention to some of the ways that social meanings and their influences cross the boundaries between different transport modes. I concluded by

demonstrating that understandings of social meanings could facilitate the development of strategies to help improve interactions between the users of different modes of transport.

8.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how understanding the influences of social meanings can help us to develop more effective transport strategies. I have shown how understanding some of the gendered meanings associated with different cars could help to facilitate the development of a more fuel efficient vehicle fleet. I have also shown that the uptake of cycling could be increased by learning from the diversity of social meanings associated with driving, and accordingly trying to ensure that a variety of different forms of cycling can enlist a wide swathe of users. I have considered motorcycling's apparent connection with well-being and recommended that future research could investigate connections between well-being, risk, and escape. I have also discussed possible ways to counter an anti-bus habitus, particularly through bringing bus use into conscious consideration and ensuring that it compares favourably with alternative modes. Further, I suggested that utility walking could be made to appear more normal through the concentration of walkers in attractive walking corridors. Finally, I highlighted some of the cross-modal influences of social norms and suggested that more wide-ranging road user training, and more social interaction between users of different transport modes, could facilitate more harmonious road user interactions.

I have focused on strategies related to the meanings that this research has identified with the help of participants in Christchurch. I have also highlighted that the research has wider relevance particularly in terms of the considerable consistency between meanings in Christchurch and other similar North American, European, and Australasian contexts. The research has also successfully demonstrated that it is both possible and useful to investigate

the influences of social meanings in considerable breadth and depth. This latter feature means that the usefulness of the research extends beyond similar contexts and can hopefully help to facilitate improvements in experiences and impacts of transport practices much more widely than Christchurch.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Addressing the Research Goals

I started this thesis by asking if Tony Moore (2010, p. 149) was right when he declared that "widespread use of the bus will never occur if it's viewed as the 'loser cruiser'". I argued that if he was correct, social meanings should play a much more central role in transport research and policy than is currently the case. The answer is clearly more complex than a simple "yes" or "no". Over the course of this thesis, I have investigated Moore's claim within a much wider context of the influence of social meanings on a range of transport practices and modes. Particularly, I have sought to address three core goals:

1. To explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch.
2. To investigate the influences these social meanings have on transport practices.
3. To identify some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices.

In this chapter, I review my progress with regard to each of these core research goals. I also examine the main limitations of my approach, appraise the contribution my research has made to an existing body of literature, and suggest future directions for research concerned with the influence of social meanings on transport practices.

Broadly, I have concluded that social meanings do influence everyday transport practices in a variety of ways. A good understanding of the influences of social meanings could enable effective transport policy-making, including the development of strategies to facilitate the widespread use of public bus services.

9.1.1 Exploring social meanings

The first research goal was to explore the social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch. I have explored a variety of social meanings associated with five different modes of transport. Chapter 5, in particular, provides descriptions of many of the meanings identified through my research; subsequent chapters supply further detail.

I have focused on the social meanings that appeared to be most widely shared and those that had the most influences on participants' transport practices. By necessity, some meanings have been mentioned only briefly, and some have not been mentioned at all. I have not, for example, been able to review the meanings associated with every different kind of vehicle in the transport fleet, or with every different socio-cultural group. I am confident, however, that this thesis is currently the most comprehensive review in existence of social meanings associated with transport in Christchurch.

I have highlighted similarities between meanings in Christchurch and those noted through research in other cities. For example, the association of buses with poverty appears to be widespread, and connections that participants made between motorcycling and escape have international parallels. I have also emphasised differences from meanings identified elsewhere. I have, for example, found very little evidence in Christchurch of an emerging perception of immorality around car use.

9.1.2 The influences of social meanings

The second research goal was to investigate the influences that social meanings have on transport practices. Almost all of the participants (92%) described being influenced by social meanings in some respect. Most participants (72%) also reported that social meanings played a major role in influencing their practices of at least one transport mode. That said, few participants (20%) described social meanings as major influences on their transport

practices overall. These different figures together suggest that social meanings were widely influential, and particularly influential on some aspects of transport, but were not a major influence on transport practices overall for this cohort. This is probably largely a result of transport practices being multiply determined; social meanings are one of a number of important influences on transport practices.

I have identified that social meanings have significant influence on transport mode choices, vehicle choices, and travel performances. I have also shown that social meanings have different kinds of influences for different modes of transport. For bus use and motorcycling, social meanings primarily influenced mode choices. For cycling, social meanings influenced both mode choices and performances of cycling. For driving, social meanings influenced mode choices, vehicle choices, and performances of driving. Participants did not describe walking as being significantly influenced by social meanings, but there were some indications that norms may affect participants' choices of whether or not to walk.

9.1.3 Conceptualising the influences of social meanings

The third research goal was to identify some key theoretical debates and positions that can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices. I have looked at whether the influences of social meanings operate through conscious or non-conscious pathways, at how our understandings of the influence of social meanings can be improved by considering structure and agency, and at the role of social groups in mediating the influences of social meanings on transport practices. I have demonstrated both that a range of theoretical perspectives can help us to understand how social meanings influence transport practices, and that these understandings can assist in the development of effective transport strategies.

9.2 Limitations

In this chapter, I spend considerable time explaining what this research has done well. This is a necessarily partial approach; all research has limitations as well as achievements. Here, I wish to briefly discuss two of the main limitations of my research and their implications. Particularly, I want to focus on my reliance on talk-based methods, and on the small sample size for my research.

9.2.1 Talk-based methods

I chose to use talk-based methods despite acknowledging their limitations (see section 4.5). Using these methods primarily reflects the difficulty I anticipated in conducting the research in any other way. Now that the research is complete, however, it is appropriate to assess how well using talk-based methods worked in practice.

The efficacy of the approach, for *identifying* social meanings appears to have been high; the efficacy of the approach for investigating the *influences* of social meanings is a little less clear. In terms of *identifying* social meanings, participants easily and thoroughly described a range of associations with different transport practices. Consistency across different focus groups suggests that the meanings being identified were widely shared. In terms of investigating the *influences* of social meanings, the approach was at least partially successful. Participants easily identified some influences, and the RQD method appears to have helped bring some others into a discursive realm (Fitt, 2015). However, it also seems to be the case that some influences of social meanings remained outside participants' conscious awareness and so could not be discussed. In particular, a habitus that guides participants away from bus use, without their conscious knowledge, appeared to be in existence. Using only talk-based methods, however, this was difficult to comprehensively ascertain.

My research questions could not, practically, have been answered using experimental methods; however, experimental methods could now be used to fill the gaps in what talk-based methods have revealed. For example, I identified an apparent—but difficult to articulate—connection between the social meanings associated with European cars and the embodied experiences of driving such vehicles. It might now be possible to test this connection using experimental methods. Previous research has used tests in which particular social meanings are made salient, for example through asking participants to read pieces of text (Gladwell, 2005; Pendry, 2008; Perdue et al., 1990; Yeung & von Hippel, 2008). Participants are then asked to complete another activity, such as an apparently unrelated questionnaire, or a driving simulation exercise. The results of the second activity can be compared for those who have or have not been reminded of a particular social meaning, thus providing further insight into the influences of the meaning. Pieces of text designed to make salient the meanings associated with different kinds of vehicles could be combined with other tests—including experiential driving exercises—to try to clarify those influences that are difficult for participants to articulate.

No method is perfect, and no single method would have comprehensively answered all three of my research questions. Using talk-based methods provided a good starting point, which could now be supplemented with other methods to fill the gaps that my research has not been able to address.

9.2.2 Cohort size and characteristics

In this research, I used an in-depth approach with a small cohort of participants. Only 32 participants were involved in the research, and only 25 completed the individual exercises. This small cohort was not representative of the population of Christchurch. It was biased towards males, middle-aged participants, higher income earners, and managers and

professionals. The size, and bias, of the cohort mean that this group cannot be considered to speak for the entire population of the city.

Although the cohort was not representative of the population of Christchurch, the results may be generalizable beyond this group of participants. In particular, the different focus groups routinely raised the same social meanings without prompting. It seems very unlikely that these specific groups spontaneously identified similar social meanings without these being shared throughout a wider population. This suggests that my cohort may be representative (in at least some respects) of *a* wider population even if it was not representative of *the* wider population. It may, therefore, be possible to generalize some of the findings to a wider group with similar characteristics, particularly perhaps to middle-aged, above average income, managers and professionals. Further research would, however, be needed in order to make confident assertions about the generalizability of the findings.

Pursuing research with a small cohort has advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages include non-representativeness and non-generalizability. On the other hand, the advantages include the ability to investigate topics in considerable depth and detail. What my study has provided is depth: a detailed picture of the influences of social meanings for a small group of people. Breadth could be provided by taking aspects of my findings and testing these with much larger groups of participants.

In addition to generating a detailed picture of social meanings for a small group, I have also demonstrated the ability of the method I used to obtain useful data. The RQD method was designed specifically for this study, and testing it with a small group has allowed me to assess its potential (Fitt, 2014b, 2015). It is my hope that the method can now be used in other studies.

9.3 Contribution to knowledge

I see three different parts of my research as being distinct contributions to knowledge. I have developed a new, and extremely effective, research method, I have demonstrated that social meanings influence everyday transport practices, and I have brought together research on five different modes of transport. Each of these contributions is described in a little more detail below.

First, I have developed a new and extremely successful research method. I developed the RQD method to try to build on the benefits of existing methods without replicating their flaws. I have demonstrated that the RQD method allows the collection of rich, fluid, and self-reflective data while posing a relatively small burden on participants and so minimising participant attrition (Fitt, 2014b).[56] I found supporting participants through the RQD exercise to be time consuming and I suggest that the method is likely to be most suitable for use in small, in-depth studies. Several other researchers have expressed interest in using the method and paper reviewers have shown enthusiasm for its potential.

Second, I have demonstrated that social meanings influence everyday transport practices. In accordance with the research goals, I have explored a range of meanings, investigated how they influence transport practices, and highlighted ways in which existing theoretical positions can shed light on the pathways through which the influences of social meanings operate.

Third, I have conducted a piece of research that has brought together consideration of all the modes of transport widely used in a single city. To the best of my knowledge, no-one

[56] The RQD's encouragement of reflection can also facilitate the study of mobile practices and may enable corporeal experiences and emotions to be incorporated in analysis in ways that other methods do not (Fitt, 2015). These additional benefits are beyond the scope of this thesis.

has previously attempted to consider the influence of all social meanings across all major transport modes. Some research has attempted to quantify the influence of social meanings on the use of a single mode (see for example Bergstad et al., 2011; Lois & López-Sáez, 2009; Steg, 2005) and some has qualitatively considered the influence of particular social meanings on the use of a single mode (Aldred, 2013a; Hiscock et al., 2002). My thesis, however, provides an assessment of the importance of social meanings across all major everyday transport practices in Christchurch.

The value in a multi-modal approach lies particularly in its ability to develop comparisons across and between modes. For example, I have shown how perceptions of risk vary in terms of the responsibility for safety that they attribute to cyclists and motorcyclists, and to the self and others. I have also shown how social norms have different influences on different groups of transport users, and I have shown how meanings associated with age and wealth are very similar across descriptions of sports cars, expensive bicycles, and different kinds of motorcycles. Comparing social meanings across different modes can lead to important implications for transport policies and strategies. For example, comparing the social meanings associated with driving and cycling led me to recommend strategies to help to diversify the meanings associated with cycling.

In addition to the three main contributions above, I have also extended previous work in some way for each of the five transport modes featured in this thesis. For driving, I have developed work on status. Particularly I have shown that the social meanings associated with different vehicles interact with a person's own context and life stage to communicate different messages. I have also highlighted some of the gendered meanings associated with small cars and have suggested that these may hamper progress towards a more efficient

vehicle fleet. For cycling, I have demonstrated that social meanings associated with road cycling overshadow social meanings associated with other kinds of cycling. I have argued that a proliferation of different meanings may help to improve the appeal of cycling for some people. For motorcycling, I have considered the development of meanings associated with rebellion and escape and have shown that these meanings hold considerable appeal for non-motorcyclists. For bus use, I have argued that participants appear to be influenced by an anti-bus habitus. Finally, for walking, I have provided additional insights into its taken-for-granted nature, including considering the reasons why leisure walking may appear more prevalent than utility walking.

My research has not made one, single, easily and neatly packagable contribution to knowledge; but it has enabled me to provide several small steps forward in different areas. Particularly, I have developed a new method, I have extended understandings of the ways in which social meanings influence transport practices, and I have used a multi-modal approach to transport research that has facilitated new insights.

9.4 Future research

Through this thesis, I have identified a number of opportunities for further research. I wish to summarise and prioritise those here to conclude the contribution of my PhD.

First, although this research has provided a useful starting point for holistic considerations of social meanings it has had some limitations. Addressing these should be a high priority. Further research using larger cohorts could be used to assess the representativeness and geographical specificity of my findings. In addition, conducting more studies that consider the influences of social meanings on a variety of transport modes would help to identify further similarities and differences between the modes. Extending this

research using different methods—such as experimental methods and comparative ethnographies—would help to supplement the talk-based methods used here. Using different methods should enable a more thorough investigation of some of the less consciously recognised influences of social meanings. Particular areas of focus here should be the activation and suppression of stereotypes in situations of road user interaction, investigations of the role of habitus in encouraging or deterring bus use, and explorations of the social and cultural significance of walking practices.

Second, this research has allowed me to identify which social meanings, associated with which transport modes, have been the subject of the most research. Some aspects of the implications of social meanings are relatively well researched, for example several high quality studies have addressed the implications of stereotypes associated with cycling (see particularly Aldred, 2013a). Other areas have seen much less research and the marginal benefits of conducting research in these areas appear higher. For example, there is relatively little high quality research considering the social meanings associated with motorcycling. This is particularly the case with "normal" motorcycling, rather than with subcultural groups and gangs and extreme approaches to risk.

In general, motorcycling appears to offer the most potential for significant new understandings of the influences of social meanings; cycling probably offers the least (although that is not to say there is no scope for further research in this area). There is also scope for further investigations into the cultural significance of different walking practices, for inquiries to determine whether an anti-bus habitus can be found outside Christchurch, and for more research into the wide variety of social meanings associated with different kinds of

cars. Particularly, the influences on car choices of social meanings associated with gender and status have attracted surprisingly little attention and would benefit from further work.

Third, much transport research has had a relatively light engagement with social theory (Dickinson et al., 2009; Derek Hall, 2004; Law, 1999, 2002; Urry, 2006). That has been changing, particularly through the contribution of mobilities studies, and of course, is not true of all transport research (Shaw & Docherty, 2014a). However, there remains considerable scope to integrate theoretical and empirical work to improve understandings of transport practices. Applying theoretical concepts to multi-modal transport studies would facilitate the development of understandings of the ways that different social meanings influence transport practices across and between different transport modes.

Fourth, I limited my own study to the influences of social meanings that can be identified primarily at the level of individuals' practices. My data suggest that social meanings also have influences on participants' emotions as well as on institutions, policies, laws, and investments. Future research could usefully explore the role of transport social meanings in these realms. It may be particularly instructive to consider the role of social meanings in the development of transport infrastructure. This may be especially beneficial where transport experts have encountered resistance to the development of infrastructure that they believe would lead to improvements in transport systems.

Finally, in this thesis, I have demonstrated some of the benefits that can be derived from a holistic study across different transport modes. There are, of course, also benefits to be derived from interdisciplinary collaboration. In the context of transport studies this could mean, for example, the development of work incorporating investigations of social meanings alongside habit, affect, embodiment, and instrumental concerns. More broadly, it could mean

studies considering the recursive loops of influence between social meanings and infrastructure, law, vehicle design, and individual practices. There would be considerable challenges in assembling a group able to conduct this work—perhaps including engineers, product designers, lawyers, politicians, and social scientists. I believe, however, that ultimately it is these kinds of collaborations that have the most potential to lead to improvements in the transport systems that are so intricately entwined in almost every aspect of social life.

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Appendix A

Participant information sheet and consent form

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021 170 5026

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Understanding transport choices

Information Sheet

Thank you for your interest in this research; reading this leaflet should help you to decide whether to participate. If you do decide to participate in the research you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you have read and understood this leaflet and agree to take part in the research.

About the research
I am undertaking this research as part of my PhD at Canterbury University. I am being supervised by Dr David Conradson and Professor Simon Kingham. A PhD involves original research usually undertaken full-time over a period of 3 or more years. The aim of my research is to increase understandings of certain aspects of people's transport choices. The aspects I am particularly interested in include stereotypes and individual identities. The research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee.

What is involved?
The research involves Toastmasters taking part in three different exercises. If you decide to participate you will be asked to complete all three exercises, but if you want to pull out of the research before, or after, completing all three exercises then you will be completely free to do so. The exercises are:

1. A focus group: This is a group discussion (usually with members of the same Toastmasters club, but occasionally a participant may be invited to a group with members of other clubs). In this discussion we will talk about stereotypes around transport. You will not need to do any preparation. The discussion will last for about one and a half hours and will include instructions for the second exercise. The discussion will be recorded on a digital audio recorder.
2. A travel diary: You will be asked to keep an individual travel diary for 7 days. The diary involves completing a short table listing travel during the day, and making an audio recording (or written record) of some personal reflections on that travel. The length of the recording is up to you but you are asked to aim for around 4 minutes each day. You can start the diary any time in the two weeks following the focus group.

3. An interview: You will be asked to attend an interview to discuss your diary in more detail, and to talk more generally about your transport choices. The interview will usually take place within two weeks of completion of the travel diary. The interview is expected to last about an hour—but exact duration will depend on how much you want to say. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder.

In addition to these exercises, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire asking your age group, gender, occupation and income group. This is to help me with reporting the results and to allow me to identify any gaps in participation.

Most participants will have completed all exercises within a month of starting, and the total time taken by all exercises will usually be between three hours and three and a half hours.

Some people may find that talking about stereotypes, identities, and their own travel choices touches on sensitive issues. I respect your privacy and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. In your travel diary you do not have to talk about issues or experiences that you would rather not talk about. In the very unlikely event that you feel stress, distress, or discomfort after any of the research exercises you are encouraged to seek support. LifeLine Christchurch offers 24/7 support and counseling; their service is free, anonymous, and open to anyone and any issue. You can contact Lifeline by calling 0800 543354.

My commitments to you

I value your time and input and couldn't do this research without participants' help. I promise:

- To treat you and anything you tell me with respect.
- To provide you with access to any recordings or written records of your own diary and interview. (Recordings of focus groups will only be provided with the agreement of all the participants).
- To keep recordings and written records of focus groups, diaries, and interviews in locked or password protected environments.
- To not identify you by name in any published results (including presentations).
- To not publish anything you tell me that you ask me not to repeat (as long as your request is made before information has been made public).
- To invite you to a presentation of results.
- To be willing to discuss results with you and to consider any further contributions you wish to make.
- In accordance with normal practice, 10 years after the research has been completed, the records of your focus group, diary, interview and questionnaire, will be destroyed.

You should understand that I will not identify you to others and will not use your real name in connection with what you tell me, but that other people (particularly people taking part in the same focus group) may be aware of your participation and may recognise your comments in publications or presentations.

Contacts for further information
If you have any questions or comments about the information in this leaflet or about the research in general please contact me using the details at the top of this letter.

If you have any concerns about the research, or would like to discuss your participation with someone else, you may contact my primary supervisor or the Chair of the Human Ethics Committee.

Dr David Conradson (Supervisor)
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Chair, Human Ethics Committee
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Understanding transport choices
Research participant consent form

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation can also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my Toastmasters club. I understand that a thesis is a public document and that the researcher's thesis will be available through the UC Library.

I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after ten years.

I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.

I understand that I will be invited to a presentation of the results. If I am unable to attend I can request a video or transcript of the presentation from the researcher.

I understand that I can contact the researcher (Helen Fitt, using the contact details above) or supervisor (David Conradson, by phoning 03 364 2987 ext. 7917, or emailing david.conradson@canterbury.ac.nz), for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.
Please hand this form back to Helen Fitt before the start of the first research exercise.

Thank you,
Helen Fitt

Name (please print): …….

Signature: …….

Date: …….

Appendix B

Example focus group guide

Exercise 1: brainstorming social meanings

Ask participants to quickly brainstorm some of the common stereotypes associated with cars and drivers. Write stereotypes on small cards for ongoing reference during discussion.

If prompts are required, ask about drivers in general, drivers of particular kinds of cars, drivers who drive in particular ways, and particular kinds of people driving (for example using cues about gender, ethnicity, age, and occupation).

Be sure to check for positive stereotypes as well as negatives, for norms, and for non-stereotype meanings.

Probe unclear or unspecific comments.

After completing the exercise for cars and drivers, complete the same exercise for other modes of transport.

Exercise 2: describing stereotypical vehicle users

Advise participants of an extension to the exercise to look at some of the stereotypical users of different kinds of transport.

Show photographs of four different cars and ask participants to describe the stereotypical users of the different vehicles.

Encourage participants to agree or disagree with one another and to build detailed descriptions.

If prompts are required, pick two different vehicles and ask how the stereotypical users might be different.

Probe unclear or unspecific descriptions.

After completing the discussion for cars, complete the same exercise for other modes of transport.

Exercise 3: Discussion

Advise participants of a further extension to look at how stereotypes influence transport choices.

Ask each participant to think of one person they know (or have met or seen) who they think matches a transport stereotype and one person who does not.

Ask each participant to describe the people they are thinking of and their transport. Extend discussion using prompts into desirable and undesirable transport modes and vehicles, trade-offs between different features of cars (such as cost, practicality, and image), and reasons for making choices. Prompt participants to consider whether people seem aware of, and influenced by, stereotypes.

Appendix C

Repeat Question Diary guide

Diary guide

Background...

In the focus group we talked about stereotypes and how these influence other people's travel choices. In your travel diary I'd like you to make the shift from thinking about other people, to thinking about yourself and how *you* travel.

The two parts...

The diary has two parts, the Journeys Table, and the Repeat Question. The Journeys table collects very basic information on where you go and how you travel. The Repeat Question asks you to reflect in some detail on who you are, and on how who you are fits with the way you travel.

Each part is described in more detail below.

General instructions...

Please complete your diary towards the end of the day, for 7 consecutive days.

If you forget a day DON'T PANIC! Ideally, I would like it if you still completed 7 days of diary – so just continue where you left off when you remember. But, if you would prefer, feel free to skip the day(s) you miss and return a diary with fewer than 7 days. Even if you only complete one day that will still be useful to me.

Journeys Table...

Your diary will be about 'journeys in Christchurch'. A journey is something that happens when you move from one address (or place) to another; for example, when you go from home to the shops. A return trip counts as two journeys. Don't worry too much about the definition of 'journey'; if it feels like a journey, it probably is.

Please record details of your journeys in the 'Journeys Table' for each day. The table has 12 rows, if you make more than 12 journeys in a single day please record your most significant (or varied) journeys until you run out of rows and then stop recording your journeys.

There is a completed example of a Journeys Table on page 2.

Repeat Question...

The Repeat Question is explained on pages 3 to 5.

Journeys Table: Day 1 (Example)

Date: 28 August 2013 **Day of the week:** Wednesday

Please list details of all the journeys you made today (up to a maximum of 12 journeys):

Journey no.	Start point (suburb)	End point (suburb)	Purpose of journey	Mode (car, bike, bus, walk...)	Approx. start time	Approx. arrival time	Notes or comments (You can use this column to make notes to remind you of things to talk about in your audio recordings).
1	Spreydon	Ilam	Going to university to study	Walk, Bus, Walk	8.00am	8.40am	
2	Ilam	Spreydon	Going home	Walk, Bus, Walk	3.00pm	3.40pm	Workman wolf-whistled as I walked past
3	Spreydon	Barrington	Supermarket – out of potatoes	Bike	5.00pm	5.05pm	
4	Barrington	Spreydon	Going home	Bike	5.10pm	5.15pm	Got chatting with other cyclists at traffic lights.
5	Spreydon	Cashmere	Going to Toastmasters	Car	7.05pm	7.15pm	Met John in car park. He was showing off his new 4WD.
6	Barrington	Spreydon	Going home	Car	9.20pm	9.25pm	
7							

(Note that the actual Journeys Tables are in landscape format to give you more space to write your answers).

The most important bit...

If anything is unclear, or if you have any questions, please get in touch—I will be very happy to hear from you!

Phone or text: 021 170 5026, or e-mail: helen.fitt@pg.canterbury.ac.nz.

Repeat Question

The basics...

The diary uses a 'repeated question' method. This means you should ask yourself the same question multiple times and record all the different answers you can give.

The question is:

When I travelled today, who was I?

I'd like you to audio-record multiple answers for this question each day for 7 days.

What to talk about...

You can talk about anything you like; this is your diary and only you can decide what should go in it. You can be entirely factual, or you can get creative (one diarist in a previous study did all his entries in the style of James Bond, starting each entry 'My name is Brown, Paul Rennie Brown'[1]). How you decide to use your diary is completely up to you.

There are likely to be lots of things jostling in your mind about your travel, some will seem more important to you than others, and some will be harder to express than others. I'd like you to express as many things as you can, even if they seem a bit random, vague, or contradictory.

Some people find it quite easy to answer the diary question; others find it harder. If you find it hard, try thinking about some of these questions too:

- What kind of car / bicycle / motorbike / skateboard etc. do you use?
- How did you choose it when you got it?
- What stereotypes do you think are associated with it?
- Do you think you are the stereotypical user of your chosen transport?
- What aspects of the stereotypes do you, or don't you, like?
- Do you travel in the same ways as your friends and family?
- If not, what do they think about how you travel?
- Have your travel choices or patterns changed during your life?
- If so, what changed, why, and how do you feel about it?
- Do you feel like you're part of a group of people who travel in the same way?

The next page shows some examples of things that other people wrote in their diaries.

Remember: this is YOUR diary; whatever you choose to say will be the right thing to say!

[1] Latham, A. (2003). Research, performance, and doing human geography: Some reflections on the diary-photograph, diary-interview method. *Environment and Planning A, 35*, 1993-2017.

Example answers...

These answers include edited extracts from the pilot of this exercise...that is, they were given by real people trying this diary out to see if it worked. Your answers might be similar, or very different.

"**When I travelled today, who was I?** I was a greenie I suppose, a quintessential greenie travelling on my bike. I feel more like a greenie on my vintage bike, today I was on my mountain bike, but I still think that makes me a greenie. I went through Hagley Park, and through all the leaves and stuff, it's pretty awesome and I do think it gives you an appreciation for what you're doing, or trying to do, for the environment.
When I travelled today, who was I? Today I was fast. I know I said that yesterday, but I thought about it a bit more, and I like being fast because I don't often wear physical clothes...generally I'm just biking along in a skirt, or a dress, and I enjoy being fast because I really enjoy getting rid of people's expectations of what they think I'm going to do. Like today, I was biking behind this guy... he was going real slow and so I decided to overtake him. I just think that there's something really cool about passing someone when their expectation is that you're probably going to go slower than them. I suppose it comes down to, like, gender stereotypes. And you know, women's bodies are more like objects, than things of action, and so I like it because I'm proud of my body because it's really, really fast at biking and I think that's really cool. It probably sounds a bit silly, but yeah..."

"**When I travelled today, who was I?** I guess I was frustrated by car travel a little bit because it is my primary mode of transport for the first time in my life. I've never really had that in the other places I've lived. I'd never owned a car before I moved to Christchurch. I walked everywhere and I really liked that. I guess I don't really feel like a driver."

"When I travelled today, who was I? I was the driver of a small pink car. I don't feel like the kind of person who would drive a pink car…when I bought it the dealership wanted $2000 extra for a silver one, and I'm too tight to pay that. I often tell people that, because I don't want them to think I bought a pink car out of choice. Pink is all girly and fits in with a bunch of feminine stereotypes that I really don't think I fit. I would rather people saw the fuel efficiency and practicality of my car, but they don't, and I don't. I always think of it not as a Toyota, or a petrol car, or a Japanese import, or any of those things. To me, it's just pink."

"**When I travelled today who was I?** I felt like a bit of an old fogey coz I was sat at the back of the bus with a number of young kids around. Felt a bit out of place.
When I travelled today who was I? I felt like, when I got off the bus…a teenage girl had got off just before me and was walking in the same direction, so I felt a little bit like she might perceive me as a creepy old man, so I was sort of walking as slow as possible to let her get further ahead, and focussing intently on my phone so as to not look so creepy."

"When I travelled today, who was I? Today I was a biker. Although some people don't like to use the term biker, I enjoy it because it makes me feel like part of a group. I guess there is a bit of a…what's it called?...a sense of accomplishment I guess, because I never thought I would be, or could be, a proper biker, I just had a 50cc for commuting, and maybe the second or third time I rode it I toppled over at the lights and it was seriously humiliating. But now I'm a skilled biker, I'm good in traffic, and on open roads…and I even sort of know how bikes work. I'm kind of impressed with myself and happy to say that I'm part of that group."

4

The practicalities...

Imagine this exercise is a bit like doing the same table topic several times. Ask yourself the question, begin speaking about it, talk off the cuff until you run out of things to say (there is no time limit and no lights!). Then ask yourself the question again, pick a different answer and talk about that until you run out of things to say.

I suggest you aim for about 4 minutes of speaking a day but don't worry if you do more or less than that.

It doesn't matter how many times you answer the question while you are speaking.

Recording your answers...

You can record your answers on any device that makes a digital voice recording which you can give to me (via e-mail, USB, CD, Dropbox...or any other format you chose). You can record your answers on your phone, laptop, camera, or anything else – just as long as you can give me the files. If you don't have a suitable device, I can lend you one.

Helpful tips...

You might find it helpful to refer to the Journeys Table for each day to remind yourself of the travelling you have done during the day.

Don't worry if it feels like you're saying some of the same things more than once – that is very likely to happen even as you try to give different answers. And don't worry if you don't manage to say everything you think of, no diary will ever include absolutely everything it could have included.

You will probably find it helpful to have a set time of day when you make your recordings. This will help you to not forget to make diary entries. Why not set an alarm to remind you to do it? Or ask me to send you a daily text message reminder?

Getting started...

The very first thing to do is to make a test voice recording. Do this, and give it to me to check that I can open it BEFORE you start recording your diary. (Your test can be anything you like '1,2,3 testing', tell a joke, sing a song, anything you like).

Once I have confirmed that I can use your recording you are free to start keeping your diary!

5

Appendix D

Example interview guide

1. I've listened to your diary and it's really interesting. What was it like keeping the diary?
    a. How long did it take? (Was it just the time to record it off the cuff, or did you think about it or do anything that I can't tell from the recordings and paper copy?)
    b. Did you enjoy doing it or was it a bit of a chore?
    c. Did you refer much to the examples and suggested questions in the booklet?
    d. Did it make you think about things you hadn't thought about before? (You reflected quite a lot on how few people walk…is that something you'd noticed before or did you become aware of it while doing the diary?)
    e. How hard was it to feel you'd said enough?
    f. If I'd asked you to write or type your diary rather than voice recording it what difference do you think that might have made?
    g. Is there anything I could do to make it easier, more fun, more comfortable, more beneficial as a speaking exercise?

2. Before we move on I'd like to clarify one thing from your diary.
    a. When you were talking about jaywalking you mentioned that in Dunedin people used to call you a 'greenie' for not wanting to jaywalk. What do you mean by 'greenie'? Is that used in a kind of 'newbie' sense?
    b. Later on, you were talking about whether people might judge you as a walker and you said that some people might think of you as a greenie. Is that in an environmental sense this time?
    c. Do *you* consider yourself a greenie? (In which sense?)

3. Now I'd like to talk a little bit about some of the ways you talked about your own travel in your diary.
    a. You began by talking about feeling like a fraud biking because you felt unfit. Do you think biking is something that, in Christchurch, only fit people do?
    b. Did you feel like part of a group of cyclists when you used to ride a bike more often?
    c. You said you thought 'everyone' knew you didn't normally ride your bike. Were you thinking particularly of other bikers, or car drivers, or pedestrians, or…? Who might've noticed?
    d. You said there were more students riding when you got closer to the University. Did that make it feel a bit less like it's only fit people and a certain group who ride bikes?
    e. Let's move on to walking. You talked about walking to and from work, do you walk to and from work in the winter when it's dark?
    f. How do you feel about that? Do you feel safe?
    g. If you're walking in the dark do you still take the back alleys and short cuts?
    h. What are the back alleys near your work for? (You talk about being an outsider when you cut through them so I'm assuming they're not usually used as walkways?).
    i. Do you feel a bit like you're doing something you're not supposed to be doing when you use them?

j. Moving on to driving then; do you feel peer pressure to drive?
k. You mentioned that it would be a bit of a stigma if people assumed you didn't know how to drive. Can you tell me a bit more about that?
l. You very briefly mentioned that the type of car a person drives is a measure of their success. What does your car say about you?
m. We talked about a car very similar to yours in the focus group. Did anyone describe any stereotypes that you weren't expecting or hadn't thought of?
n. Do you see your car differently following on from the discussion in the focus group?
o. You mentioned at one point not feeling conspicuous in your car because it's non-descript. Could you see yourself driving a less non-descript car? A bright orange one, or a lime green metallic one perhaps?

4. That brings us on to some 'what ifs'.
    a. Can you imagine yourself riding a scooter? What would be the benefits? How about the disadvantages?
    b. What do you think your family, friends, or colleagues might think or say if you said that you were thinking of getting a scooter?
    c. How would you feel about negotiating traffic on a scooter?
    d. Do you feel you would fit with stereotypes of scooter riders?
    e. What about using a skateboard? You said you used to ride your brother's, would you consider riding one now?
    f. We're going to try a bit of an imaginative question now. Imagine your ideal commute. You can have absolutely anything you like, it doesn't have to be realistic, you can have any weather you like, any scenery, an urban or rural environment, any vehicle or none, it can be a short or long commute, you can have company or be travelling alone, absolutely anything you like. You're ready to leave the house, talk me through what happens next.

5. Again, I want you to imagine that you get up one morning, and you're about to head out to work. I've got 4 statements here, I'm going to read you one, and I want you to describe to me how important you think it is in determining how you get to work, particularly whether you walk or drive.

    It's habit, I don't really think about it
    It's the most practical choice for doing what I need to do
    I enjoy it
    It fits with how I see myself

    Do you think you could put the reasons in an order of importance?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your transport (things you've thought about since doing the diary maybe) or anything you'd like to add about experiences of doing the research in general?

    Thank you!

Appendix E

Transcription symbols

Function	Symbol	Example
Significant pause (pauses have not been timed)	(.)	She was (.) making a complete idiot of herself.
Stress	underline	It made me so angry.
Prolonged preceding syllable	:	Ye:s, I suppose you could see it like that.
Undecipherable words	( )	It's not ( ) science.
Possible, but unclear, words	(words)	It's not (rocket) science.
Text implied from context	[text]	OK, who's got an example [of a stereotype]?
Cut-off, or restarted, word or sentence	-	It was probab-
Text transcribed but omitted from quoted extract (same speaker)	…	It's very true that…she cares what others think. (Original: It's very true that, like I was saying to Pam earlier today, she cares what others think).
Text transcribed but omitted from quoted extract (different speaker(s))	…	Peter: I would describe him as quite arrogant…just because of that behaviour. (Original: Peter: I would describe him as quite arrogant- Sue: Would anyone like another piece of cake while I'm up? All: No thanks. Peter: -just because of that behaviour.)
Author commentary or notes	((text))	I like driving on twisty roads ((mimes turning a steering wheel))